

IN YA

3244

Journal of Barricade Books : \$3

RENEGOTIATING the train

*anarchists & autonomists
have a bit of a debate*

ABORIGINAL SOVEREIGNTY

*a perspective on
anarchist approaches*

PROPOSAL

*for a regional
anarchist federation*

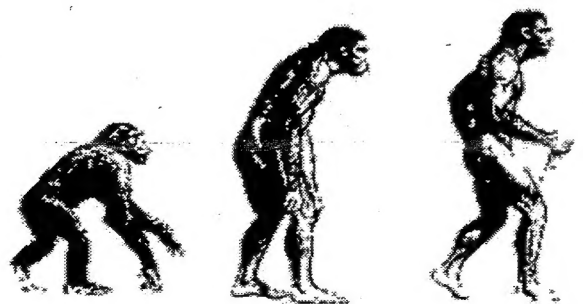
WORKER'S CONTROL

russia after 1917



Discontents

04	Debate: Renegotiating the Terrain
08	Postscript to Renegotiating the Terrain
10	An Anarchist Perspective
12	Strategies Against the WTO
14	Prisons are the Real Crime
16	Gallery
17	A Proposal for a Regional Anarchist Federation
22	What is an Affinity Group?
28	Building an Antiwar Movement
32	Aboriginal Sovereignty: an Anarchist Critique
34	From Melbourne to Woomera
38	Paideia: 24 Years of Anarchist Education
41	Workers' Control After 1917
45	B.Traven
47	Story: Anne Bonny & Mary Read
49	Review: On Fire: The Battle of Genoa
50	Review: Pat Califia



Idiotorial

Pleased to introduce ourselves . . .

Hello! And welcome to this, the fifth edition of IN YA FACE: "the zine from Barricade Books/Infoshop". Yes, it's been a long time coming - but we're sure you'll find it to have been well worth the wait. And if not, well, DIY is where it's at, so why not publish your own zine? (And while you're at it, send us some copies to stock in our shop.)

We welcome correspondence on any of the issues contained herein: just drop us a line via the addresses below. The next issue of IN YA FACE, our sixth, will be released in late April / early May 2003, and the deadline for submissions is March 31. We mean that!

Barricade News

Barricade is moving! After almost eight years at 115 Sydney Road, Barricade is now taking up residency at **Irene Community Arts Warehouse**, 5 Pitt Street, Brunswick (ph: 9387 9699 or 9343 6695, Melways map 29, J8). Our opening hours will remain the same - Wednesday to Friday 11am to 6pm and Saturday 11am to 3pm - and we're still easily reached by public transport: nos. 1, 22 & 25 (Lygon Street) trams. So, come and check us out at our new location! In other news...

On April 2 2002, following Woomera 2002 the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs issued a search warrant authorising offi-

cers of the Department "to enter and search any building, premises, vehicle, vessel or place" in which they suspected they might find 'unlawful non-citizens'. And where, you might ask, would an authorised officer of the Department suspect that they might find such 'unlawful non-citizens'? Three guesses.

Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of our friendly staff - and a quick peek under a large stack of unsold copies of *Rebel Worker* - we were unable to assist the Department with any information regarding the whereabouts of any escaped concentration camp inmates... excuse us... 'unlawful non-citizens'. Despite this embarrassing failure on our part, we wish both the Department and its officers the very best of luck in future, and assure them that their efforts - and the efforts of those like them - will no doubt earn them a very special place in Australia's history - just as they've already earned in our own hearts.

On July 12, Barricade held its inaugural film night at Trades Hall, Carlton. The two films shown were documentaries: *Paint it Black: Anarchism, Urban Uprising & the Mainstream News Media*, a film by Jessica Lawless about anarchist organisation, media and race; and *Breaking the Spell: Anarchists, Eugene & the WTO*, a 'Pickaxe Production' about anarchist involvement in 'N30' (the anti-WTO protests in Seattle in late 1999) and the corporate media's response to this new 'anarchist menace'. Many thanks to all that attended and to Jim and Paddy of

Union Promotions for helping make the night a great success.

Finally, a big thank you to Caitlin Street for allowing us to exhibit her work *Grater* in September and October as part of the 'Kiss My Art' Window Works 2002 program.

.....

Barricade Books/Infoshop is an anarchist infoshop located at Irene Community Arts Warehouse, 5 Pitt Street, Brunswick. The basic aim of the collective that manages Barricade is to provide greater public access to anarchist ideas, and thereby encourage local anarchist activism. For the purposes of the Barricade collective, an anarchist is someone who believes that an anarchist society - a classless, non-hierarchical society - is both possible and desirable, and actively works towards making this belief a reality.

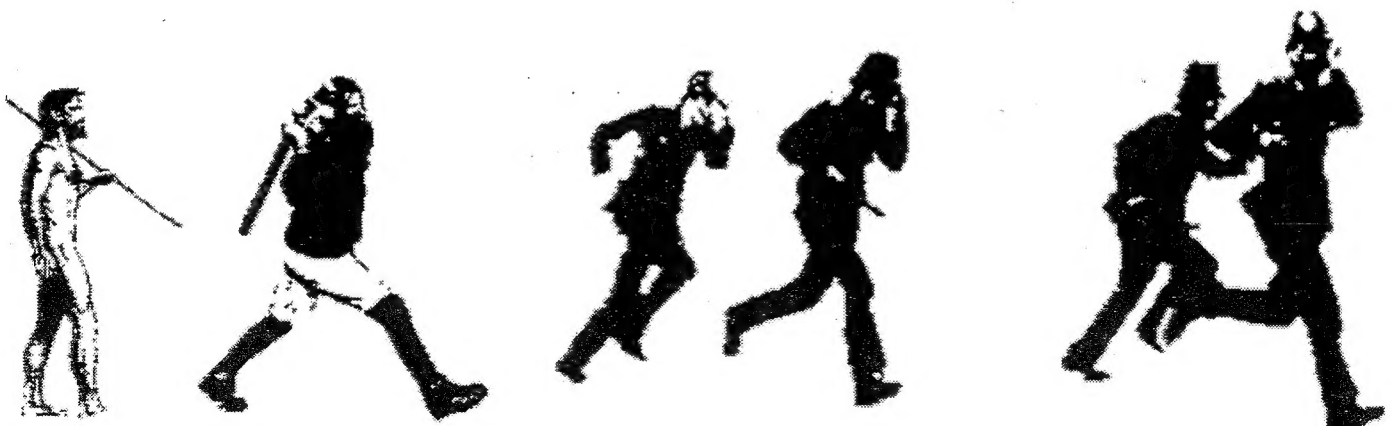
Barricade Books/Infoshop is located on Wurundjeri land.

**BARRICADE BOOKS & INFOSHOP
5 PITT STREET, BRUNSWICK**

**Postal address:
PO BOX 199,
EAST BRUNSWICK, VIC, 3057
AUSTRALIA**

**Phone:
(03) 9387 6646**

**Email:
infoshop@bedlam.anarki.net**





In late 2002 a long and passionate debate took place on the melbourne.indymedia.org website following the posting of the following article. Many important issues relating to the development of a movement for social justice in Australia were raised during the debate, most notably that of the question of the meaning and significance of 'autonomy'. In this series of articles In Ya Face reproduces the original article, a postscript to that article by one of its authors together with an anarchist response.

Renegotiating the Terrain

The goal of autonomous movements is to transcend nation states, not capture them. - George Katsiaficas

In Australia, whilst an autonomous tendency has always existed, the sll protests in September 2000 marked a more overt shift. Whilst many people were involved through the traditionally organised sll Alliance, others opted for more radical methods. This organising coalesced predominantly around and was inspired by the Melbourne based 'autonomous web of liberation' (AWOL).

This shift and subsequent growth of autonomous networks, both in Melbourne and around Australia, can be seen to have inspired and enabled the Autonomadic Festival of Freedoms to Woomera at Easter (Woomera 2002) as well as a variety of other forms of action and projects such as squatted social centres and independent media events. Unfortunately this emerging tendency and the growing number of events organised in a decentralised manner are overwhelmingly ignored by independent press, the academy and those engaged in the more traditional and entrenched modes of organising such as the union movement and political parties.

One of the disturbing characteristics of mainstream culture and media is the invisibility of genuine diversity and dissenting voices. It is a discredit to any outlet, person or organisation professing to be progressive to perpetuate this culture of invisibility by ignoring, denying or simply being unaware of, the existence of the flourishing and wide ranging autonomous grass-roots networks.

It may seem that addressing the



coverage of sll is passe, drenching up some long gone event, but these unaddressed issues remain equally, if not more so, pertinent today. This discussion is particularly important given that the same tensions and lack of discussion played out after the May Day 2001 rally and seem to be emerging around Woomera 2002 - despite the fact that the fundamental assertion of the call to action for the event is a commitment to autonomy.

This essay is not intended to speak on behalf of the various groups and tendencies involved in the broad and diverse networks of autonomous organising. Rather it serves to start a dialogue and pose some questions. One of the key aspects of autonomous social movements is their multifariousness, making it impossible for any one person to represent the movements as a whole. The opinions herein are solely ours.

One of the disturbing characteristics of mainstream culture and media is the invisibility of genuine diversity and dissenting voices. It is a discredit to any outlet, person or organisation professing to be progressive to perpetuate this culture of invisibility by ignoring, denying or simply being unaware of, the existence of the flourishing and wide ranging autonomous grass-roots networks.



demonstration of over 130,000 Philipinos against APEC.

Of course inspiration also comes from movements in the north, from the May 1968 uprising across France, radical art movements such as Dada, the influential works of the Situationists, anti-roads campaigns in the UK, movements such as Earth First!, Germany's autonomen, Italy's autonomia and social centres, Reclaim the Streets (RTS) parties, feminist and queer politics, techno and punk culture, and underground publishing. These threads place great emphasis on individual empowerment through notions of D.I.Y (do-it-yourself) politics.

Locally, events such as the 1998 Jabiluka blockade and direct action campaigns, often against environmental destruction, have been influential in building a network outside institutionally based social change models. Indigenous struggles from the Tent Embassy to the Walk for Peace have also informed and inspired threads of these networks. Similarly, independent media groups such as SKA TV, whose videos have screened nationally and internationally for just under a decade, and the birth of Sydney and Melbourne IndyMedia in 2000 have given visibility to and thus networked and encouraged these groups further.

Where have we come from?

Whenever there has been power there has been resistance to it. From the centuries of struggle against feudalism, to the resistance to colonisation and militarisation, the many paths and inspirations of today's social movements can be traced.

The energy that has inspired so many disparate groups to join together in mass actions is a senti-

ment of resistance drawing inspiration from autonomous movements and struggles around the world. 'The movement' is often traced back to the counter WTO protests of Seattle in November 1999, whilst of course an important event, its roots go much deeper; to the resistance of indigenous peoples and marginalised communities in southern countries around the globe such as the 1994 armed uprising of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) in Chiapas, Mexico or the 1996

Another key characteristic, demonstrated most articulately recently by the Woomera 2002 campaign, is the rejection of single-issue politics and an encouragement to 'draw the connection' between different campaigns, to discover the root causes of the present malaise. These links and more sophisticated networking has also been facilitated by the advent of networked and decentralised communications such as e-lists, email and websites.

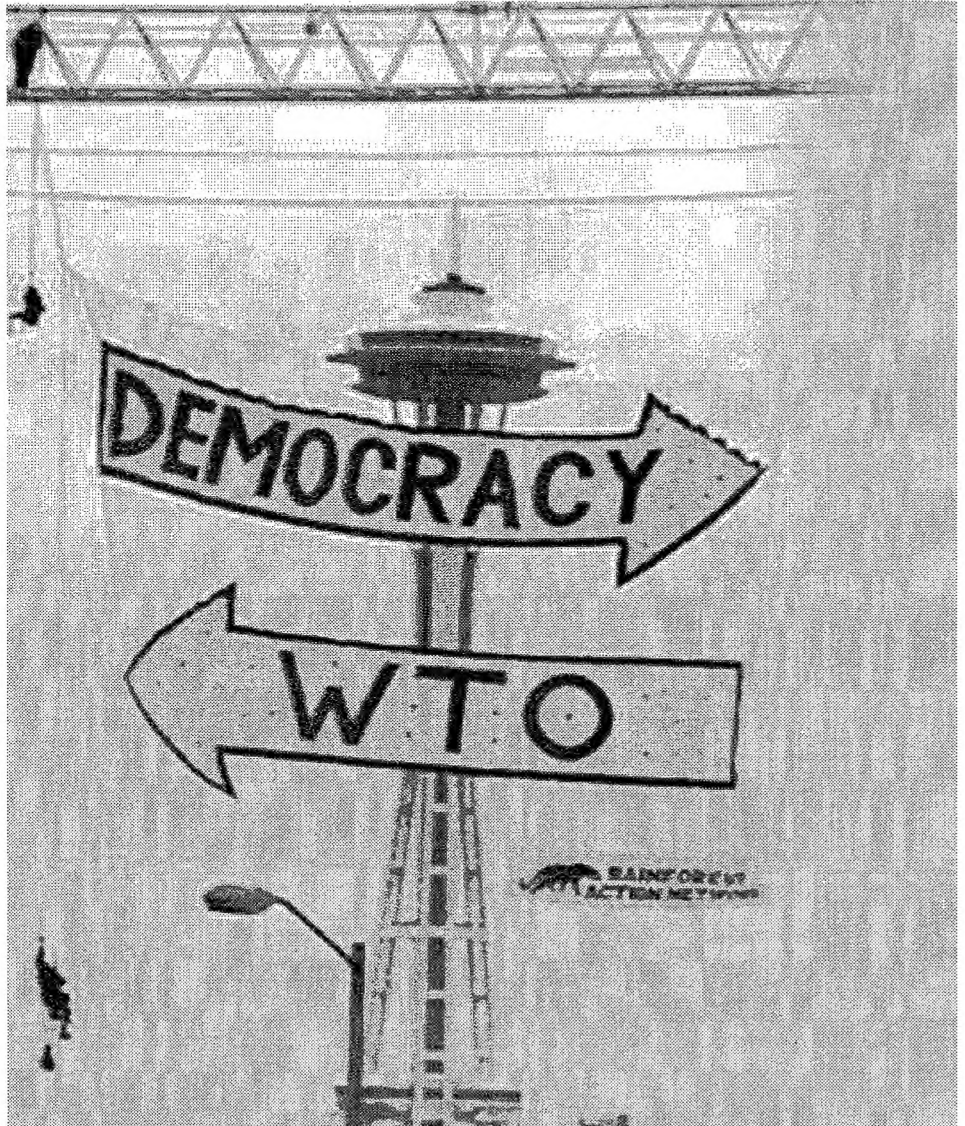
Autonomous from what?

Their collective form negates atomization, their activism transforms the passivity of the consumeristic spectacle negating the reification and the standardization of mass society. - George Katsiaficas

'Autonomy' has become quite the buzzword of late, which in some instances seems to have become divorced from its original meaning. When we speak of autonomy we are not speaking of Autonomist Marxism, a theoretical thread that includes the likes of Negri, Cleaver, Deleuze, Guattari et al, although they have been influential in many circles and no doubt inspired strands of these networks.

Autonomous organising is extra-parliamentary, is free from control by the state, bureaucratic unions, churches, political parties and capital. Obviously it is not possible to make oneself autonomous from omnipresent factors by merely organising separately from them; rather, autonomous organising attempts to carve out a space, free from commodification, ideologies (but not ideas), the domination of work and the cooptation of political parties and pop culture. This carving out of space is explored and realised both through the modes of organising and meeting structures used at sites such as RTS parties, squats and blockades.

Autonomy means self-management or self-rule. Moving away from passivity to self-activity, encouraging participation and a d-i-y ethic, not following a preformed model for social action: autonomous social movements aim to stimulate self-organisation as part of the function of enabling direct democracy. They aim to subvert the traditional political roles of leader/follower by fos-



tering a highly democratic and egalitarian culture of organising. It is a radical rejection of constructed roles and a questioning of the legitimacy of the authority that teachers, parents, governments, experts, activists, organisers (etc) hold, which is so rarely challenged. By its very nature autonomous organising disrupts the ability of the authorities to isolate leaders. Instead, a decentralised multifarious web with no single command structure is created.

Autonomy does not mean hyper-individuality, where the common is dismissed to make way for the rights of the individual. Autonomy is much more challenging: it requires each person to radically assess their own needs, desires, roles and responsibilities in any given situation, and the intersection of theirs with those of others. Of course autonomous organising hits bumpy terrain where the intersections of these desires, needs,

Of course autonomous organising hits bumpy terrain where the intersections of desires, needs, roles and responsibilities must be negotiated. The point is not necessarily to arrive at a single model of organising, but rather to start a process and, as the Woomera 2002 call to action suggests, 'make the journey'.

roles and responsibilities must be negotiated. The point is not necessarily to arrive at a single point, a single model of organising, a correct way, but rather to start a process and, as the Woomera 2002 call to action suggests, 'make the journey'.

The re-writing of history

After sll some groups scrambled to take the 'credit' for organising the events. The DSP and sll Alliance seem to claim they were solely responsible for the event, the *Green Left Weekly* proclaiming 'Victory'. In Socialist Alternative member Jeff Sparrow's *Overland* account of sll, AWOL doesn't even rate a mention. In the recent book *Dissent Events* AWOL is again noticeably absent. The author also claims that the sll.org website was the sll Alliance's website, parroting the mainstream media line - in spite of the fact that the site's creators asserted they were an autonomous affinity group.

The willingness of the Alliance to position itself before the media and AWOL's complete rejection of the corporate media on principle resulted in the Alliance being positioned to take all the 'credit' and the most vibrant and original activities being undocumented. Some blame here does rest upon AWOL's rejection and lack of organising around the issue of media and information dissemination. A potentially large space opened up for the discussion of autonomous politics was forfeited.

The idea of blanket non-representation may have to be readdressed and explored if those involved are to take the space they deserve. The idea of delegation is obviously used within spokescouncils so it is curious why this is not expanded to encourage a greater diversity of voices within the media scape. This

is not to suggest that groups should run around chasing corporate media. You cannot fundamentally change society through the medium of mass media, even if the corporations didn't own it, the medium is too impersonal, too superficial. There are however many alternatives to the 'one-way' transmission and spectacular culture of the corporate media, which flourished in the networks formed through AWOL and again through Woomera. AWOL's rejection of media was perhaps linked to a broader suspicion of all forms of mediation, be they parliamentary representation or corporate media. The emphasis instead was on direct action, direct democracy and unmediated collective action.

In some cases it is clear that the lack of recognition of autonomous groups by other 'progressive' groups is due to a vested interest in ignoring, and often discrediting such modes of organising. The tensions within the autonomous networks regarding media representation have allowed for an easy capitalisation by more media hungry and obedient groups. This exclusion is tiring and clearly based on political difference and a dismissal of the legitimacy and size of autonomous networks.

In other cases the misrepresentation of autonomous groups, or their absence from articles about the very movements that they inspire, can be attributed to a lack of research and knowledge of or connection to those networks. For instance a recent article in *Free Nrg: Notes from the Dancefloor* suggests that the sll Alliance was organised as AWOL was. This amusing confusion of the often fiercely defined difference between the two groups is a common example of the events surrounding sll being misreported. This kind of misrepresentation demonstrates lazy research, but fur-

thermore supports the criticism that there is a sheer lack of genuinely probing analysis of the events in question.

And so...

Writing this in the lead up to the Woomera 2002 protest camp, which is being organised autonomously on a model of affinity groups and spokescouncils, is a curious time. Woomera is one of the first events where the split between the traditional modes of organising and autonomy has not yet played out - groups, even those coming from a more traditional position, seem to be committed to organising horizontally.

This article only scrapes the surface of a much larger discussion which is happening in many places: in pubs after meetings, on email lists, in squats and social centres, at benefit gigs and in zines and some underground media. Although it is happening, we would like to see it acknowledged more, outside the realm of those actively involved. We hope that this essay throws down a challenge both to those failing to address the existence and legitimacy of autonomous organising and networks and to encourage those people engaged within such networks to make more effort to express themselves outside their own sphere.

We hope for a time when more voices fill the media and political scape, when we have a society where difference is celebrated, not invisible.

Andrew and Aggy



Renegotiating the Terrain: Postscript

This is a post-script to the article "Renegotiating the Terrain, Autonomous Social Movements," originally published in *Arena Magazine* and subsequently the opener to a barrage of debate, discussion and incursions into the realms of anarchy and autonomy on the Melbourne Indymedia website <melbourne.indymedia.org>.

This post-script was written at the request of Barricade Books *In Ya Face* publication and as such is short and incomplete due to limited space. Alex was unable to contribute: the opinions are solely mine.

Beyond anything else the amount of debate sparked by the article expresses both the massive lack of space the Australian anti-authoritarian milieu has to discuss its ideas and actions and the growing interest in extra-parliamentary politics. The particular indymedia page has now become a broader discussion space and has long since moved away from debating the article. Spaces for dialogue, discussion and experimentation, whether face to face, on the net or through publications, seems to be an urgent project for the greater development of an autonomous, anti-authoritarian tendency. There are many people who have ideas, opinions and experiences to contribute to a debate around autonomous politics and a growing interest around the country in the different shapes of refusal such ideas and actions have thrown up.

Re-reading the article and the comments beneath articulates many shortcomings though I still feel that it expresses valid interpretations of some of what has been occurring over the last couple of years. It never intended to encapsulate everything, nor did the article claim to be any more than the observations of two active participants. The intention of the article was to be one account and to encourage more, to spark debate and make visible the burgeoning tangle of networks that reject hierarchical

and statist approaches to social change.

The critiques and debates ranged far and wide: lack of class analysis, the often subcultural nature and middle class composition of the autonomous milieu, no mention of anarchism, approaches to media, autonomism and much more. There is not space to address all these issues, and I don't presume that I can. The heated, sometimes nasty, often enlightening debates speak for themselves. The more real-time, face to face discussions that expand the participation and the voices the better.

Anarchism versus Autonomism: a False Divide

Some people appeared to interpret the article as an attempted coup by the "autonomists" to capture ideological hegemony and credit for the upsurge in anti-authoritarian organising over the last couple of years. It was interesting to read some comments that complained of the lack of attention given to anarchism and then others that bemoaned the "dismissal" of autonomist Marxism. The fact is that we weren't talking about anarchism or autonomism but autonomy. Many groups and networks, including both anarchists and autonomists, prominently use or have used the word 'autonomy'. Autonomous Web of Liberation (AWOL), Social Centre Autonomous Network (SCAN), Footscray Liberation Autonomous Groups (FLAG), 'Autonomy and Solidarity' (Love & Rage magazine) and many more. Woomera2002 was also called with an explicit commitment to autonomy. Obviously there is an "autonomous" affinity worth exploring as a broader concept and tool. It is, however, unhelpful to set up dichotomies where there are none. What is more useful is to examine the praxis of autonomous organising and explore the common ground that exists between groups. Autonomy is a word many people should feel free to own. Limiting its interpretation to

"autonomism" is counter productive. The article didn't claim any particular ideological banner but rather attempted to explore some of the common ground the tendencies, in my mind, share.

It was quite right, as some did, to point out the lack of discussion of anarchism in the article. Anarchism was and is a huge influence in the growth of anti-capitalist resistance around the globe and many of the methods were developed by anarchists. They were also developed from the peace movement, Italian Autonomia, the Situationists and May 68, the new left, punk, Reclaim the Streets, Zapatistas etc. The omission was a mistake (it was originally mentioned). Concentrating on autonomy was a strategy to avoid slipping into the seemingly endless anarchist/socialist debates that creates an either/or lineage of resistance and to express the multiplicity of the radical heritage that has infused these new movements.

I'm interested whilst sceptical of the value of talking about an "autonomous tendency". Is it a useful way of establishing some common ground? And if not, what kind of language and ideas can? For me the commonality is the ideas of self-management, self-activity, self-directed struggle, horizontal and decentralised networks, diversity versus a correct line, direct action and direct democracy and an extra-parliamentary, anti-statist and anti-capitalist approach to politics. The labels are not as important, the common ground is.

With Friends Like These

The 60 pages (and still growing) of comments reveal the lack of dialogue that has happened since all around the efficacy of libertarian organising. After all I saw only a few articles that analysed the event from an anarchist or anti-authoritarian position. Why aren't more people writing about political strategy? This may have something to do with the sometimes less than constructive responses, often

Building effective networks of resistance involves some level of analytical work. If that process is not open and encouraging, the development of ideas will stagnate and the movements with it.

nasty and personal attacks such attempts spark. I've talked with quite a few people who're interested in writing something but don't feel the environment is one that respects, let alone encourages, a constructive debate. It would be helpful to deal with the politics rather than the personalities.

Building effective networks of resistance involves some level of analytical work. If that process is not open and encouraging, the development of ideas will stagnate and the movements with it. Granted, the wordiness of much of the writing also makes it difficult for some people to contribute.

More than anything else, more than the Trots, capital or the cops, the biggest impediment to the growth of autonomous resistance is the culture itself and the collective struggle to overcome capitalist socialisation. And this is to take into consideration not just the narkyness but the sometimes "too cool for school" nature of the autonomous "scene" as pointed out by some commentators. I would concede that the article dealt too much with 'cool,' 'underground' notions of resistance. Breaking the movement beyond the sub-cultural margins was a major emphasis amongst commentators. The arguments also exposed the limits of the net and indymedia as (in)communication tools.

Class Dismissed

One of the main criticisms of the article centred around the attention, or lack thereof, paid to class. This is a significant flaw and also an expression of where much of the organising is at: it often lacks a class perspective and is predominantly composed of people of middle-class backgrounds. In a negative sense then, it is often 'autonomous' from working class and everyday struggles.

Activists are often situated outside those struggles which confront others' daily alienation or oppression, but not their own. However many of the 'autonomous' projects do involve some everyday resistance to capital, such as squats or serving free food. Much energy goes into creating spaces that exist outside of capitalist logic, struggling to create new social relations and meaning in an isolating and commodified world.

There was also no analysis of the material and social conditions and changes in class composition that have given rise to what one person described as the 'new new left'. A radical and detailed analysis of Australia's class and social composition and how it relates to organisational strategies seems a needed project. Much of the debate revolved around the changing class composition and its relationship with other sites of struggle such as gender, race and sexuality.

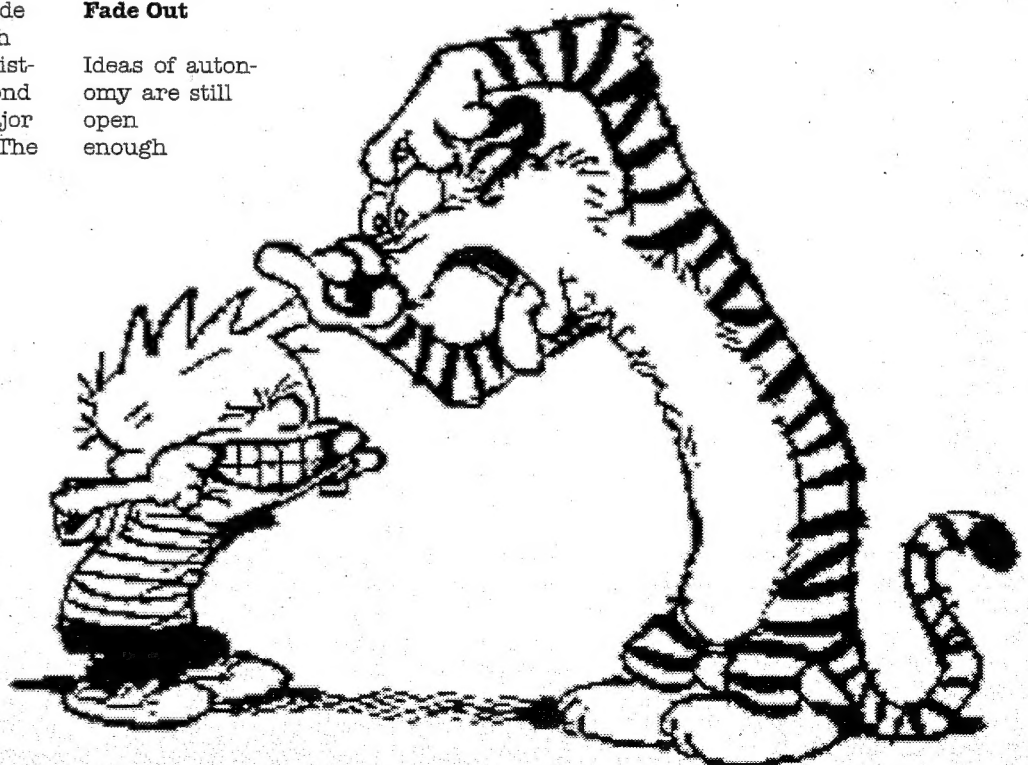
Fade Out

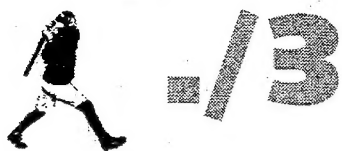
Ideas of autonomy are still open enough

to be constructed. The problem is: is all this talk constructing more ideology? A new niche market? How do we talk about ideas and use them without them becoming identity badges and commodities?

The onerous task is to deal with the many issues raised: class, subculture, methods of interpersonal communication, and to move beyond the false divisions imposed by ideological branding. The question, as always, is *how*? For me, the most urgent project is space for dialogue and experimentation, spaces from which to hatch plans, catalysts for action, that are diverse and varied and can appeal to and involve a multitude of people.

Andrew





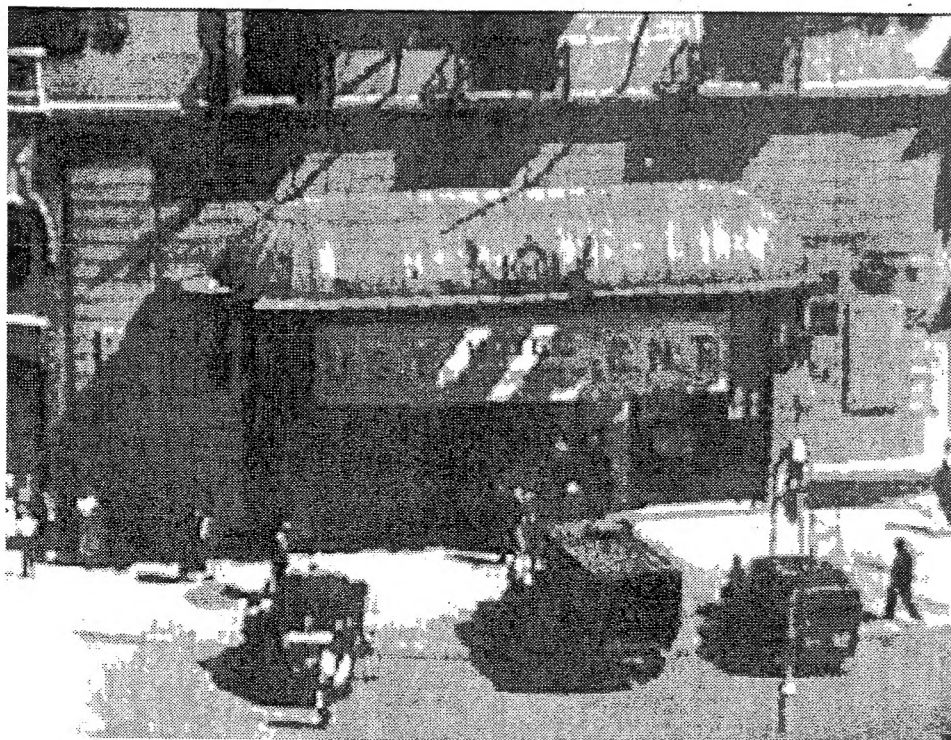
Renegotiating the Terrain: An Anarchist Perspective

There were many and varied objections to the article 'Renegotiating the Terrain' on Melbourne Indymedia. Whilst it is true that some were more personal than political, one remains unanswered and is, I think, crucial to this debate: just what are the political objectives and principles of 'autonomy'?

The authors of 'Renegotiating the Terrain' are correct to state that 'autonomy' has become a buzzword of late. Further, you only have to listen to the Trotskyists use the word to realise just how debased the term 'autonomy' has become. And, while any attempt to contest this misuse of the term 'autonomy' is laudable, the article and the post-script only leave us with further confusion: what is the politics of 'autonomy'?

To say that 'autonomy' has been divorced from its original meaning begs the question: what is its original meaning? In the Spanish anarchist movement of the 1880's, many anarchists used to refer only to 'autonomy' instead of anarchy in their publications and propaganda. They also used the term 'acracia', the rough English equivalent for which is 'no government'. These three terms were used interchangeably by Spanish anarchists and Internationalists. Is this the original meaning the authors refer to? When anarchists talk about 'autonomy', we use it in this context. That is our history and our tradition. So it is confusing to hear others refer to it in a way that does not appear to be interchangeable with anarchy. And it is frustrating to find that these people are not able to properly explain their concept of what 'autonomy' means.

It is stated that 'autonomy' is not the same as 'autonomist Marxism' such as that of Negri, Cleaver and others. Cleaver himself makes the distinction between 'autonomist' and 'autonomous' politics. And as difficult and dry as some of these writings are to read, anarchists are able to identify where the 'autonomists' are coming



The Ritz Hotel in Barcelona, collectivised by anarchists and socialists during the Spanish Civil War and Revolution, 1936-9. One of the more spectacular achievements of the anarchist revolutionary tradition in that country.

from, especially concerning their class-struggle analysis and anti-Leninist revolutionary strategy. And it is possible for anarchists to identify the many points of convergence with autonomists. The autonomist group Love & Rage (not to be confused with the North American Love & Rage anarchist network of the early to mid 1990s) explicitly state that they identify with Marxist and anarchist politics. We know what the 'autonomists' stand for, but what about 'autonomy'?

Our objections to 'autonomy' (sic) have nothing to do with ideological hegemony or undue credit: they have to do with whether or not there is any sense in being able to conclude that we have shared political objectives. It is true that 'commonalities' are more important than labels. But similar buzzwords like self-activity, diversity,

direct action and anti-capitalist approaches are of limited use in any discussion about commonalities. What about the necessity for social revolution, workers' control of production, free municipalities, or federation of autonomous communes? It comes down to this: do those that subscribe to this 'autonomous' politics have as their goal radical change of the whole of society or simply a carving out of a "space" within capitalism to celebrate diversity?

Or are we simply talking in completely different languages? A simple question in the Indymedia discussion about whether or not this 'autonomous' politics believed in the objective of social revolution was faced with an absurd response that a revolution is what a bicycle wheel does. How can we talk of commonalities? Similarly with class.

Do those that subscribe to this 'autonomous' politics have as their goal radical change of the whole of society or simply a carving out of 'space' within capitalism to celebrate diversity?

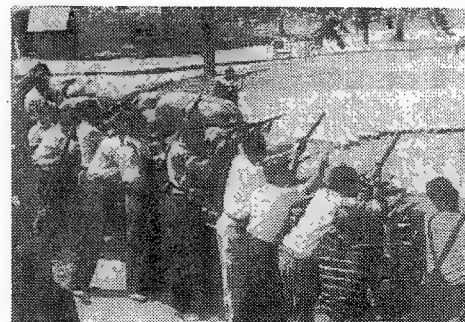
The idea that there is a lack of class perspective in present organisation because activists are often situated outside struggles which confront others' daily alienation or oppression is an astonishing statement. This may be true for these 'autonomous' activists but it certainly isn't for most involved in anarchist and autonomist revolutionary politics. Again, how can we talk of commonalities? We seem to be occupying different planes of existence.

To say that a radical and detailed analysis of Australia's class and social composition seems a needed project is at first glance similarly astonishing, but becomes less so when one takes into account the statements concerning the 'autonomous' position within daily struggle. For most of us, we simply take a look outside our window. You don't need to be a Rhodes scholar to see that we live in a class society and that the ruling class control social wealth, wealth which has been created by the working class (the majority). And sure, the nature of class has changed since the 19th century when Karl Marx was writing about it, just as capitalism as a whole has changed. And while it's unfortunate that today many Trotskyists continue to peddle this "blue-overalled industrial proletariat" stereotype of the working class - one which completely distorts contemporary class struggle - you don't need to engage in some academic research about class composition to understand how class society operates.

Almost without exception, revolutionary social movements in the twentieth century have sought to conquer national political power - either to take over nation states through elections or to overthrow them through violence. The goal of autonomous movements is to transcend nation states, not capture them. -- George Katsiaficas, *The Subversion of Politics*.

heavily from the ideas of Katsiaficas. In *The Subversion of Politics*, Katsiaficas critiques the autonomist politics of Negri and others and attempts to construct a new theory of 'autonomy'. His analysis, like that of the authors of 'Renegotiating the Terrain', is based on the claim that the 'autonomous' ideas of direct action, direct democracy and anti-parliamentary action fell from the sky in the 1960s. Indeed, it is interesting to note that the authors only quote the second sentence from the above passage, as the first clearly demonstrates the failure of Katsiaficas' analysis. What about anarchist struggles of the Ukraine in 1918 or Spain in 1936? Were these not two monumental social movements whose goal was to transcend nation states? The failure of Katsiaficas to analyse these two social movements consistent with his thesis on 'autonomy' reveals the dishonesty and revisionism that many Marxists employ when it comes to anarchism. To be entirely fair to the authors of 'Renegotiating the Terrain', it may be that they simply fell into the trap that Katsiaficas himself had already set.

Anarchist objections to the omission of anarchism in this discussion on 'autonomy' stems not from some perceived ideological branding but rather an opposition to dishonesty, both political and historical. How honest is an approach to identifying 'commonalities' that ignores perhaps the greatest commonality: the historical progression and influence of anarchist ideas on the politics of 'autonomy'? It shows the depth of ignorance or hostility to anarchist ideas by those who wish to look at alternatives to the traditional authoritarian Left. Or perhaps this hostility is due to the fact that those who subscribe to this politics of 'autonomy' aren't committed to anti-authoritarian politics at all, but simply wish to place themselves within the spectrum of the authoritarian Left, with a few buzzwords added for good measure.



Armed workers put down the military rebellion, Barcelona, July 1936.



Nestor Makhno, Ukraine, 1921.

The authors have apparently borrowed

Brenton



The announcement of the November 2002 meeting of the World Trade Organisation at Homebush stadium in Sydney prompted the following article from several locals participating in anti-WTO actions. Subsequent issues will discuss these protests, especially their significance for local anarchist organising.

Strategies against the WTO

The announcement that the World Trade Organisation will conduct a "mini-ministerial" in Sydney on November 14-16 has injected the autonomous left with renewed energy.

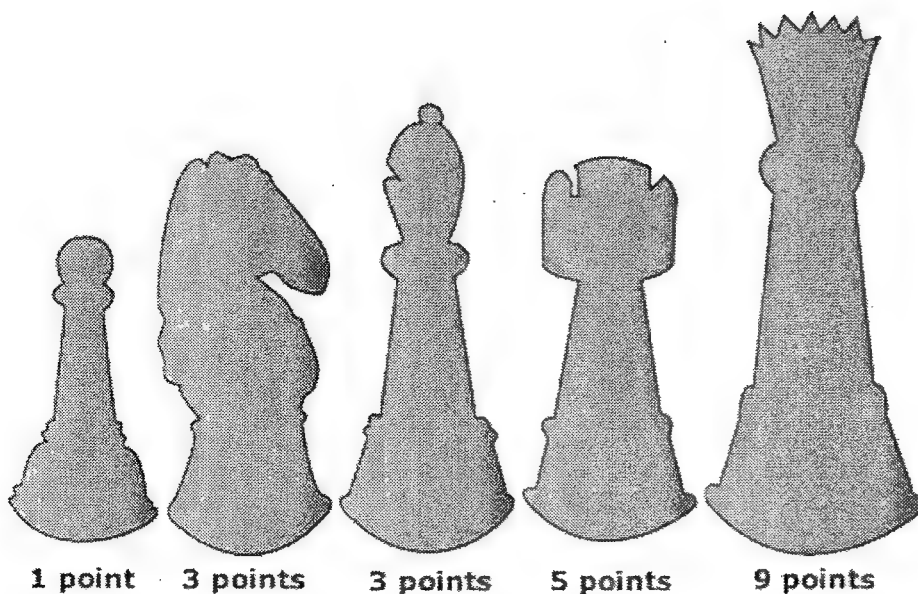
At first sight it seems that those wishing to organise in an anti-capitalist, decentralised and libertarian manner have quickly taken much of the initiative. Such politics, in my opinion, are currently in a period of growth, particularly after the Woomera2002 protests which, despite its faults, proved much of their practical potential. I write this to put out, as others have been on indymedia, some ideas for discussion. I have more questions than answers and am interested in what people's ideas are.

Education and Action

Before people go off talking of blockading/attacking protesting or whatever, the political context for such action needs to be established. Before we scream "shut it down" (which by the way I completely endorse) we need to be clear why. What is the aim of the meeting and how does it affect our lives? What does the WTO do? Why should I go to Sydney or take action in my local community? People feel the effects of capitalist neo-liberalism and structural adjustment on a daily basis. Whether it is the shipping of work overseas, corporate downsizing, the gentrification of suburbs, the cutbacks to education and welfare or the borders the government builds to keep people out. A large number of people throughout Australia are pissed off. This doesn't mean that everyone knows exactly why or can pinpoint who or what is driving this. I certainly need to learn a lot more. The point I'm trying to make is that before we demand action we gotta explain why, otherwise we become what the media says activists are: a rent-a-crowd. In this sense, then, teach-ins about the WTO and capitalist globalisation are needed. Groups who could go out and speak to others about the WTO (and capitalism in general) would also be useful.

Beyond Violence vs Non-violence: Beyond Blockading

It was disturbing at s11 how much



blockading was fetishised as the only tactic. Whilst I think in certain cases picket lines and blockades are a useful tactic, they seem to be employed by Trotskyist groups more as a way of corralling people into a megaphone receptacle. They emphasise an organisational strategy based on modernist uniformity. With the rise of technologies such as the Internet the possibilities for organising horizontally have greatly increased. The mass working class that these tactics have been based around has changed. People now work in more diffuse and decentralised ways. Mass culture has given way to more diverse sub-cultures. The emphasis on decentralisation and diversity articulates this. The danger is that diversity becomes a cover for individualism and liberalism.

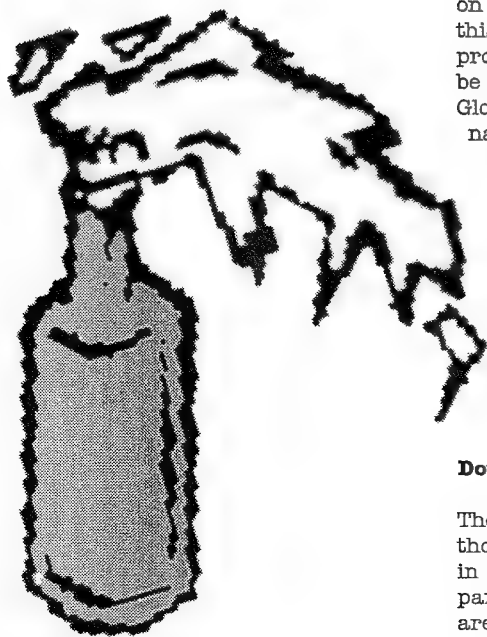
Obviously there are many other strategies from black bloc to snake marches, street parties to marching bands to the

'tactical frivolity' of the pink and silver bloc. The idea of 'respect for diversity of tactics' is one that could take us far beyond the boundaries of violence vs non-violence and mass uniformity as political ideas. The onus, however, is on the non-violent groups to refuse to do the cops' work by isolating those that engage in more confrontational tactics and on these sections to ensure the safety of others and to act democratically by not forcing situations on others. "Respect for diversity of tactics" goes both ways, and shouldn't be seen as an opportunity for unbridled machismo or diffusing our politics. Disobedience and direct action that express the reasons why, both literary and literally, should be encouraged.

Do the Math: s11 + m1 =/= n14

One crucial aspect I think is to go beyond the letter and number game and also beyond defining ourselves as anti-globali-

The problem of capitalist globalisation cannot be solved through nationalist means. Globalisation forces us to act beyond the nation state to create real globalisation. The result will merely be capital flight, the CIA no doubt will be sure to topple whoever comes along. The problem is a global one and needs to be taken to such a level, beyond the nation state and governments, and establish links; networks of solidarity, with the local:



1,000,000,000
points

Most people seem to be doing this, but there is some residual branding people seem to be unable to escape. Viewing the WTO protests as a sequel to s11 is counter-productive; seeing them as part of a cycle of struggle from which to take critical inspiration is another matter. We need to develop new language so as to avoid falling into ritualised roles, especially around the problematic activities of summit stalking, already a well rehearsed role that needs some serious breaking if it is to go beyond mere spectacle and liberal/leftist moralising.

Against Nationalism

There is a huge need to posit an anti-nationalist and anti-statist current within the protests that goes beyond union, NGO and socialist demands for a strong state to regulate global capital. The contradictions need to be drawn out between the

free movement of capital and corporations and the increasing confinement of the movement of people. I will be choking on my porridge if I hear anyone calling this an anti-globalisation protest. The problem of capitalist globalisation cannot be solved through nationalist means.

Globalisation forces us to act beyond the nation state to create real globalisation.

The result will merely be capital flight, the CIA no doubt will be sure to topple whoever comes along. The problem is a global one and needs to be taken to such a level, beyond the nation state and governments, and establish links, networks of solidarity, with the local. The ideas of a migrant march and no-border actions have already been floated by some.

Down with Reactionism

The authoritarian left in Australia, though on the rise post s11, is receding in my opinion. The shift towards more participatory and decentralised methods are gaining favour, not because people have engaged in fantastic amounts of Trot bashing but because they are proving themselves practically. Beyond the mass workplace, diffuse networks create a situation for direct democracy to function with little hierarchy and centralisation. In my opinion the social and class composition acts in favor of such methods. The danger however is to take them to the level of individualism and to play down the commonalities. The commonalities are what allow us to act together, diversity is what keeps us together. The point I'm trying to make is that we should refused to get bogged down reacting to what the socialist parties are doing and produce what we want to see.

Ongoing Networks: Thinking 2 Steps Ahead

In chess, moves are made not thinking of your or the opponent's next move but thinking 2,3,4 steps ahead. Our approach should be similar. Where do we want the no-WTO actions to take us and how can we get there? For me the construction of an ongoing regional autonomous network of anti-capitalist, anti-statist groups would be one such project that might facilitate an anti-authoritarian approach

to social change. Something that would carry with it the new world in the shell of the old. This might help us avoid getting bogged down in post-WTO sectarian clashes and carry the momentum into a regional (i.e. pan-national) network of local struggles.

Beyond the Spectacle: Into Everyday Life

Mass actions can be very useful in articulating and establishing a broader fabric of struggle. They allow for networking through practical goals, they bring people together, establish commonality through the recognition that our struggles are inter-related. Hopefully they disrupt, at least temporarily, the workings of the capitalist machine. However, taking the struggles beyond reacting to meetings of capitalists is essential. How exactly to do this I don't know. In many ways it seems that the protests exist outside of everyday life. They are spectacles that have little affect on people's everyday conditions. I certainly don't have any answers, but I'm interested in hearing from people about how to take the cycles of struggle that have developed from the anti-capitalist globalisation movement into the everyday. The power of the WTO is very real. Its use as a tool to expand neo-liberalism and corporate power, down sizing, privatisation, the race to the bottom, exploitation of the environment etc have real effects on our lives. The question is, how do we move from the spectacle into the everyday?

What Do We Want?

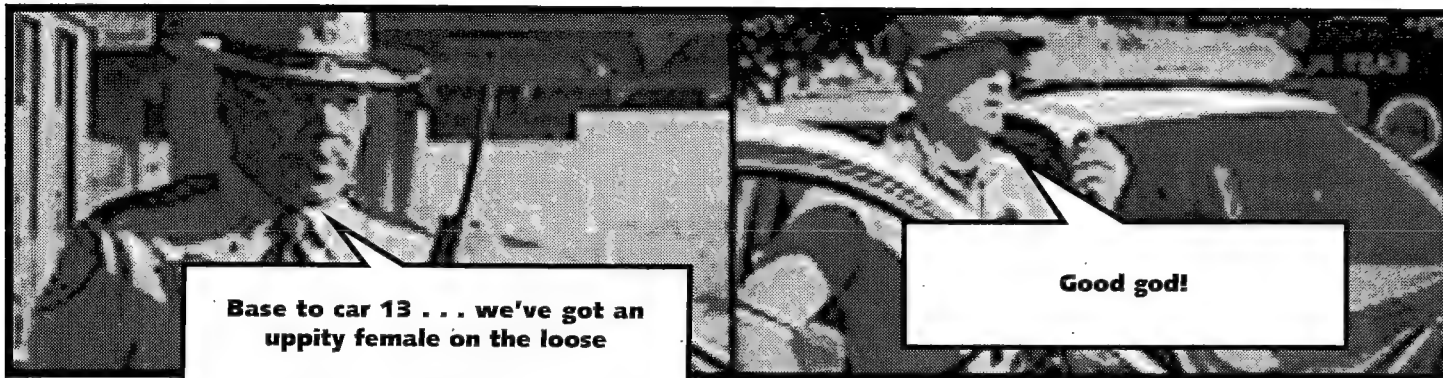
I'm also really interested to see people articulating the world we do want (and I don't mean LETS and solar power, something a little more substantial). In many ways, that comes through how we organise and the internal culture we create. At the same time, I'm really interested in hearing practical alternatives. It's a question that has been asked a thousand times but I still want to know, what do we want? If there is one "no" what are the many "yeses"? What are the many worlds we want and how are we going to get there?

New Kids on the Black Bloc



As elsewhere, the privatisation of prisons in Australia has resulted in the privileging of corporate profit at the expense of human health and well-being. In this article, we survey some of the effects these trends are having on women and men behind bars and identifies the criminals responsible: Australasian Correctional Management, Wackenhut and Group 4 Falck.

Prisons are the Real Crime



A woman incarcerated at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre told this story:

1.8.02

Following the beginning of my imprisonment, I was taken to hospital for an abortion and a hysterectomy. I was handcuffed for the whole period I was at the hospital. I had to sign forms, but I couldn't as I was handcuffed – the nurses had to help me. The officer escorting me did not ask my permission to remain present during the operation, but remained present for the whole operation. Officers are supposed to be present for such procedures only for high-risk prisoners, which I am not.

Following the operation the hospital gave me a note, telling me not to bend over and that 6-10 days rest was needed. The hospital also gave me anti-biotics. When I returned to the DPFC I was strip searched and made to bend over – they had lost my note and anti-biotics from the hospital. The stitches I had from the operation got infected without the anti-biotics. I am a smoker. Without work I had no money. Without money I could not buy cigarettes. I went back to work. The stitches busted open, I went to medical and they tried to use un-sterilized equipment on my wound. I am a tattooist. I know about sterilization. I have never seen any sterilization facilities at DPFC.

The stitches and my wound went gangrene, I went to the medical unit and waited in line with the rest of the women – all I could use was Betadine strips to fight the infection. Luckily, I knew what I

needed to do; medical certainly didn't offer any help. There are so many women in here who need medical help; even the officers admit that the medical facilities here at DPFC are shocking. We may be in prison but we are still human beings.

Another woman told this story:

2.8.02

I feel I need to let whom it may concern know of a couple of problems I've come across since arriving here at DPFC. It all revolves around the medical staff. One problem I feel must be brought to your attention is in the year 2001 during a short stay here, I buzzed up the staff stating I was mentally unwell, also stating I was only experiencing some delusional sights, no voices, nor was there any need to try and hurt myself. I was still told I was to be wet celled – informed only after I agreed, being told if I didn't I'd be forced, that I would be wet celled in medical. With the night staff being only male I was left naked all night and morning, for I was told all I could have was one wet cell blanket because the rest was locked in the wash, until morning medical staff re-changed. All night I was unlawfully, un-needfully humiliated.

Now in 2002 I've been on remand for 1 month, so far I have had 5 fits. Only after the 4th did the ambulance come, they asked why I'd had 4 already and not only were they not even recorded, no higher medical practitioner was informed other than the nurses. After being brought back and still to this day, I have received no tests or offers of help for these fits I

keep having. I am also awaiting plastic surgery as I sit with my right index finger ruined. I came in with an infection leading to the loss of my nail plus the top of my finger leaving my finger bone protruding. Not only painful to myself, though quite clearly horribly sore and infected. I fail to eat enough as the pain is all too intense. After my finger was amputated, it was not healing properly, so back to the hospital to cut off more. Now one of my other fingers is infected.

Must we actually die or lose limbs for being criminals, who mind you are still as I've found caring women. It feels this situation has gone beyond a joke.

.....

Australasian Correctional Management trading as Pacific Shores Health (PSH) holds the contract for healthcare services in the eleven CORE (the Public Correctional Enterprise) publicly operated prisons in Victoria. The security giant ACM, trading as PSH, went into contract with the Department of Justice as represented by CORE in January 2001 for the provision of health care at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre. There have been numerous complaints about PSH doctors and nursing staff: lack of adequate equipment; failure to respond to calls of distress. Above are just two of the many complaints written to the Health Services Commissioner, a supposed external monitoring body, as women and men inside prisons try to obtain improvements to the sub-standard level of medical care and facilities they receive.

The Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (DPFC),

While private companies and governments may argue over who should pay for improvements to health care, women and men suffer in custody, losing limbs and being denied the equipment they need for their health conditions as the prisons 'cannot afford it.'

previously the Metropolitan Women's Correctional Centre, is situated in Deer Park, next door to the Boral Quarries and adjacent to the recently announced Metropolitan Remand Centre - a maximum-security men's correctional facility that commences construction in 2003. The view from behind the razor wire where these stories were told is far from scenic. The MWCC was an example of how badly a prison could be run. It was the first privately designed, financed, built and operated prison in Victoria. Correctional Corporation of Australia (a subsidiary of Correctional Corporation of America) operated this prison from 1996 until the Government bought it back in November 2000 for \$20.2 million. It was then that the MWCC was renamed the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre. It is now run by the Department of Justice as represented by CORE, the Public Correctional Enterprise, which operates the eleven public prisons of the thirteen prisons in Victoria.

Australasian Correctional Management (ACM) is the Australian subsidiary of the Miami-based security giant, The Wackenhut Corporation. ACM was registered in Australia in 1991 and quickly became active in the new growth industry of private prisons. ACM has operated the Arthur Gory Remand and Reception Centre in Queensland since 1992, the Junee Correctional Centre in New South Wales since 1993, the Fulham Correctional Centre in Victoria since 1997 and the Melbourne Custody Centre since last year. Three years ago, ACM won the tender to run Australia's six Immigration Detention Centres and to provide detention transport services, which means ACM Officers are employed to remove people from Australia who fail to win recognition as refugees. The government described its deal with ACM as a strategic alliance with three main aims. One aim was cost savings, and according to Immigration Department Annual Reports, this has been achieved. The cost of detention has fallen from \$145 per detainee per day three years ago to \$112 today. ACM topped \$100 million turnover last year and made an after tax profit of seven-and-a-half million dollars.

The Wackenhut Corporation is named after its founder, George R Wackenhut, who began in big business as a small time private investigator and then expanded

into hiring out security guards. From this he has grown a huge corporate empire which counts the United States and Australian Governments as major customers. Wackenhut guards top-secret nuclear facilities for the US Department of Energy including the Nevada Test Site and the Savanna Ridge Site where weapons-grade plutonium is produced. Wackenhut Corporation has received contracts to develop and manage 55 private prisons spanning the United States, Australia, Great Britain, Puerto Rico, South Africa, New Zealand, Canada and the Caribbean island of Curacao. However, Wackenhut itself is a U.S.-based division of Group 4 Falck, the world's second largest provider of Security Services. Group 4 Falck is based in Copenhagen and has activities in more than 80 countries and is the market leader in over half the countries in which it operates. Group 4 operates the Port Phillip Prison in Laverton, Victoria - a maximum-security men's prison with a capacity of 680, the third of privately owned prisons in Victoria. Why is a security company responsible for health services in Victorian CORE prisons?

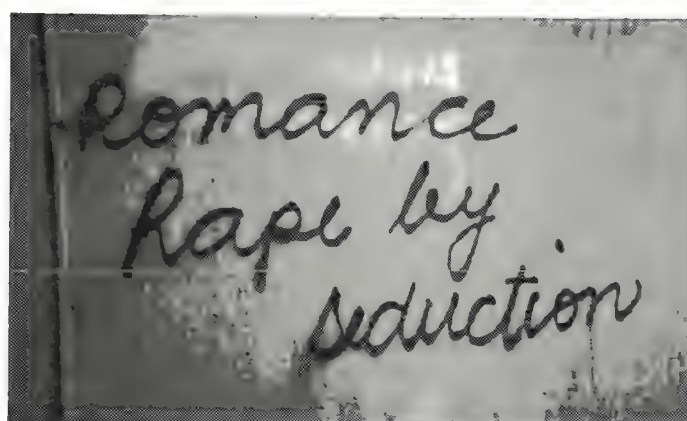
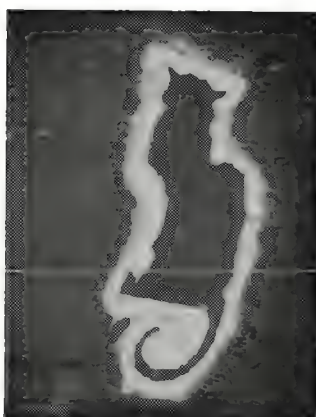
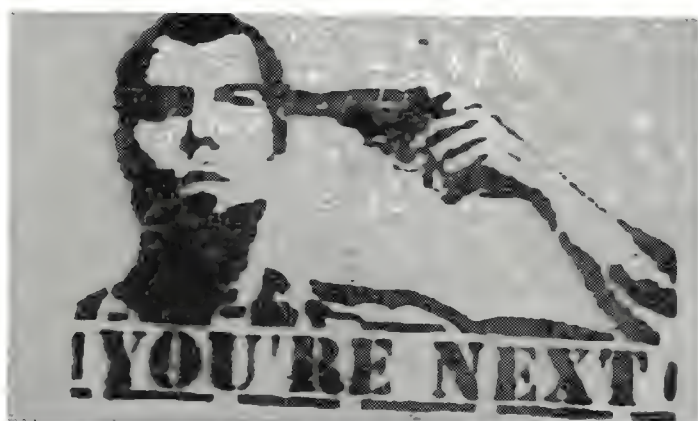
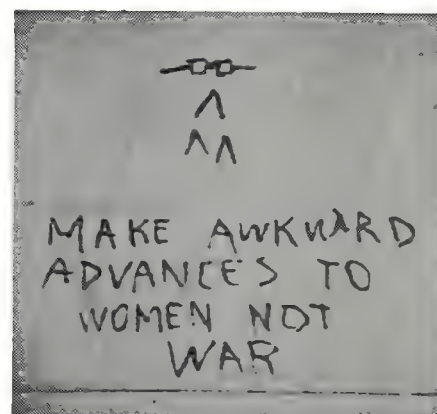
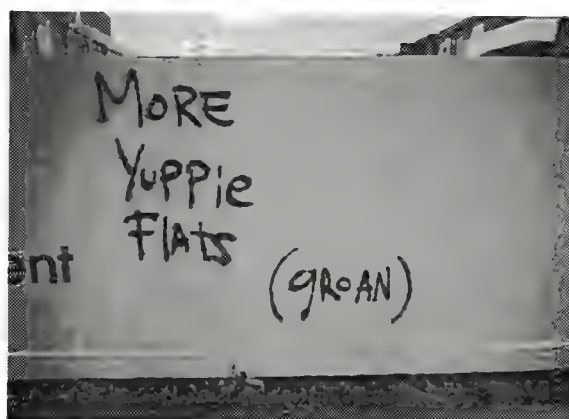
Privatised prison health care allows huge corporations, such as ACM / Wackenhut / Group 4, to take over and be accountable only to themselves. As the health care in CORE prisons is contracted to a private company (ACM) the standard delivered is subject to interpretation of the contract. A dispute over the quality of care administered by ACM is left for the Government and ACM to argue over, as ACM must be compensated for changes made to the contract. The Government could possibly fine ACM for lack of adequate health care, which would mean a legal battle between ACM lawyers and the Government - a likely scenario? While private companies and governments may argue over who should pay for improvements to health care, women and men suffer in custody, losing limbs and being denied the equipment they need for their health conditions as the prisons "cannot afford it". Wackenhut Corporation boasts an annual turnover of US\$2.2 billion and enjoys the prestige of a place on *Forbes* magazine Platinum List of the best big companies in the United States. It is difficult to believe that it is a matter of being unable to afford necessary medical equipment.

A major area of neglect in privatised prison health care for is the overmedica-

tion of prisoners. With regard to the accountability of privatised prison health care, a lack of record keeping and adequate supplies of correct prescription medication, people in prison are being given inappropriate drugs - in some cases being asked what drugs they want to take - and there is no or very minimal monitoring of this. It is in the interests of the prison management to ensure overmedication: "a good prison is a quiet prison". In order to maintain a quiet prison population, levels of medication administered are very high. Doped up on anti-psychotic drugs and anti-depressants, morphine and other similar drugs, people in prison become malleable. The over-medication of people in prison extends beyond the prison gates and the release date. With extremely high background levels of prescription drugs in their systems, people are released into the population, often into old circles of friends who have been associated with drugs: one hit with their tolerance changed so much, they find themselves overdosing. The prison provides no prescriptions to wean themselves off their overmedication whilst inside - it is a situation of cold turkey. In the last ten years, over 120 women have died within hours days months of leaving prison.

Prisons are the real crime. Corporations profiteering from the lives of women and men incarcerated are the real criminals. People in prison become the forgotten population. Prisons have become one of the biggest profit growth industries in the last ten years. Huge corporations making profits from human storage. With a Government committed to building more prisons the expanding prison industrial complex is a huge concern. When a prison is built, the justice system produces more "criminals" to fill them, the more prisons are built the more people there are to fill them. Once in prison, people are robbed of their dignity, their autonomy, and their right to adequate health care - it is a desperate, awful place. Must people die in custody at the hands of private corporations fronting as health providers - all in the name of capital?

Gallery



Images courtesy cleansurface.org



Anarchists are often accused, falsely, of being opposed to 'organisation'. Nevertheless, there are many problems anarchists (and others) must confront if they wish to develop forms of organisation that are both effective and libertarian in nature. With a view to overcoming some of these problems, we therefore present

A Proposal for a Regional Anarchist Federation

The following is a proposal for a regional anarchist federation, originally posted on the South Pacific Anarchist Network email list (SPANET). It is necessarily specific to Melbourne, Victoria, and attempts to suggest possibilities for bridging the chasm between the current state of the anarchist movement in Melbourne and a (possible, future) federation of anarchist groups. While similar arguments would apply in the case of a national anarchist federation, I believe that such a federation should be created from the bottom up, hence the stress in this article on the *regional* as opposed to the national.

In the beginning...

The question of control or ownership of anarchist resources has led to vicious splits, divisions and arguments in the anarchist movement. I believe that the principal reason for these divisions has been two-fold. First, the often unprincipled manner in which such resources have been created. Secondly, confusion over the aims and purposes of the groups charged with the responsibility for managing these resources. This has led to factionalising, allegations of privatisation etc and the unfortunate situation of ostensibly communal resources being controlled by anarchist groups in competition or conflict with each other. In my view, the formation of an anarchist federation is the key to solving this situation. I argue that, rather than these anarchist resources being considered the property of whichever group happens to be using them at the time, these resources should be *collectively* managed by a federation of anarchist groups.

Barricade, Jura & ARI

The problem of the current state of resource management within the anarchist movement may be illustrated by the cases of Barricade Books and Jura Books / Anarchist Resources Incorporated (ARI).

ARI came into being in order to help purchase a property to house Jura, an anarchist bookshop. Funds came from many different sources - funds which have now been effectively privatised. Each person who contributed money to ARI has no ability to take part in decision making in

the ARI, which is an exclusive club composed of just 6 people. Since 1995, attempts by anarchists to question the management of the Jura collective (and/or ARI) have been met with expulsions, lock-outs, and claims that Jura is an "autonomous" collective.

Barricade Books, on the other hand, was established by the withdrawal of pledge funds in the International Workers Club,

a 'special' group of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation. (It has also received financial support by anarchists in general, in particular the donation of an anarchist library.) Unfortunately, some members of the Barricade collective at one time came to consider the collective an 'autonomous' group in a disturbingly similar sense to Jura, and this has encouraged the perception that Barricade bookshop and library was the exclusive



property of the Barricade collective. I speak for myself as a member of Barricade when I say that this is not my view of the proper relationship between Barricade and the anarchist movement as a whole.

Alternatives

A principled anarchist method of collective resource management is based on the idea that resources are the collective resource (or property) of an anarchist federation, ultimately accountable to the federation congress. In this scenario, particular resources would continue to be managed by a collective of anarchists, each of which are members of the federation. Individuals who have a particular interest in the management of a resource would still approach the relevant collective, while any major dispute or question regarding the management of the resource would be resolved by the federation.

Community?

As with Jura, various resources are supposed to be owned by the "anarchist community". However, unless community is given some organisational basis in reality, it is a meaningless term. The attempt to provide such an organisational framework does have some historical precedents. For example, many years ago a proposal was put forward to create a 'Melbourne Anarchist Club' (one which I understand was based upon individual membership). In turn, this idea has informed the adoption of individual membership of a local Melbourne anarchist resource.

The adoption of an individual membership structure is, I would argue, the first step in the creation and identification of an "anarchist community". Anarchism is not chaos, disorder, disorganisation or whatever goes. It is based upon specific principles. In 1976, the Federation of Australian Anarchists set out a list of such principles, and these continue to serve as a useful guide to what anarchists believe. According to the FAA, anarchists:

1. are opposed to both capitalism and state socialism;
2. accept both the possibility and the



desirability of libertarian socialism, that is, a co-operative and egalitarian social economy without the state;

3. reject the view that the state - that is, the police, army, parliament and bureaucracy - is the decisive instrument for the achievement of a libertarian social order and;

4. accept the necessity of co-operation, planning and organisation for the achievement of anarchist aims.

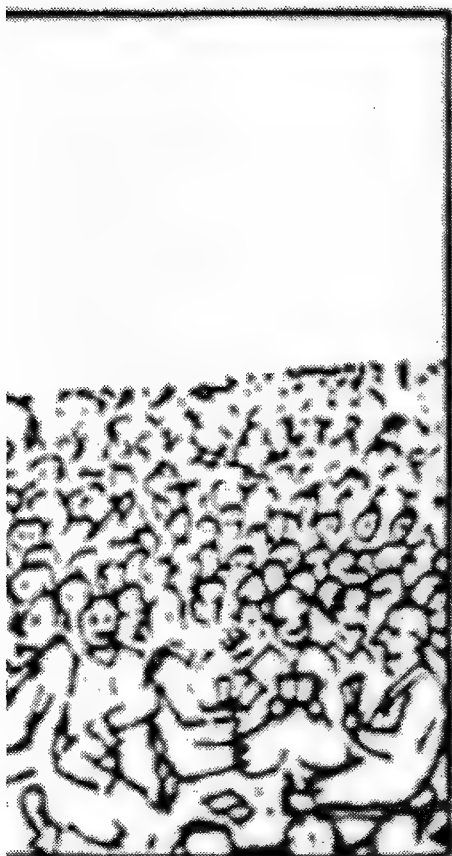
However, in my opinion, an individual membership structure is a poor substitute for anarchist federalism - a federation of affinity groups is the principled anarchist organisational method. And while a federation may not be possible at the moment, it should be the aim of any serious anarchist activist who wishes to promote and further anarchist organisa-

tion.

One way of fostering the creation of a regional anarchist federation would be to establish an 'Association of Anarchists in Melbourne'. This Melbourne Anarchist Association would hopefully, in turn, foster the creation of many and various affinity groups. These affinity groups would outgrow an individual-based association to become a federation of affinity groups.

An alternative to the creation of such a federation is to attempt to create a federation by linking existing groups. However there are very few "anarchist specific" groups in Melbourne at present. There are other groups that are anarchist in principle but not in name. Anarchism has a poor reputation which is in need of

A federation of affinity groups is the principled anarchist organisational method. A federation may not be possible at the moment, however it should be the aim of any serious activist who wishes to promote and further anarchist organisation.



immediate repair. Fortunately, work is being done to foster a network of these anarchist and autonomous groups.

Objections

I anticipate that there will be groups and individuals violently opposed to this proposal. I expect that they will offer such objections as the need to avoid "bureaucratic institutions" that the federation will be perceived as (inevitably) being. This is merely "anti-organisation" propaganda or extreme liberalism. Many others have anti-federalist or anti-organisational ideas because they fear accountability or losing a sense of their own self-importance.

The other objection will be from groups that perhaps currently manage or have

exclusive access to resources themselves. They may not want to "give up" these resources to a federation for fear of "losing control". They will want to continue their control of these resources and may politely refrain from participating in the federation.

This is unfortunate: unfortunate that the practice of federalism has been lost to so many generations of anarchists in this country. I can only hope that, in time, these anarchists will be convinced of the desirability and equity of federal control of resources, or that they will, in the spirit of comradeship, whilst retaining their control over resources, freely allow the federation access to these resources. Indeed, there may be good and principled reasons why particular groups do not wish to "give up" their resources, particularly if they are the product of their own energy and development. This proposal mainly deals with resources which are currently for "the anarchist community", and proposes a way of dealing with how we define "the anarchist community" and how that community manages those resources. In the fullness of time, I would hope that, with a strong anarchist federation, those groups who have developed their own resources themselves freely give them to the federation.

Moving forward

If the second method of building a federation is adopted - that is, working with existing groups - I believe that the following groups should be invited to attend a discussion on the creation of an anti-authoritarian network or federation of affinity groups:

Access News; Anarres Books; ASF groups (or anarchist members thereof); Barricade Books; Brunswick Community Resource Group; Food not Bombs; GECCO; Indymedia; IWW (or anarchist members thereof); Libertarian Workers for A Self Managed Society.

The Organisational Platform of the Federation of Australian Anarchists [see following article] is a very good model from which an anarchist federation can be built. However, I propose two modifications to this Platform:

1. Only affinity groups should be members of the federation. Individuals that are either unable or unwilling to join any group should be able to join as "Friends" of the federation. This would entitle them to participate in the federation in all areas except that of decision-making at Congresses.

The principal reason for limiting membership of the federation to groups lies in the necessity for experience in the practice of 'anarchist democracy' as a way of making decisions. Integral to this process is free discussion and debate and consensus (or substantial majority) decision-making - a process which entails compromise, abstentions and synthesis. On their own, individuals simply cannot engage in such a dynamic social practice. Further, the federation - being composed of delegates - necessarily demands that, in order to arrive at the point of mandating a delegate to the congress, these processes have been engaged in. A council of delegates is not the place for debate regarding such issues.

2. That the decisions of the conferences (or congresses) of the federation should be expressed to be binding on the federation. This simply means that there is a moral and principled obligation to carry out and abide by the decisions of the federation. Of course, the federation would recognise the principled use of abstention in federalist decision making, and consistent with this practice, abstaining groups would not be obliged to proactively carry out these decisions. However, abstaining groups would also be required not to engage in conduct which interferes with the carrying out of the decisions of the federation. Finally, any group that violently disagreed with a decision of the federation would be free to leave the federation if it chose to conduct itself in opposition to such decisions.

Bren
member of Barricade & ASF-Melbourne
(personal capacity), June 2002



APPENDIX

The Organisational Platform of the Federation of Australian Anarchists

Preamble

Ever from the Second World War having produced a stable system of great power blocs secure in their heartlands and held in frozen equilibrium by the threat of mutual nuclear annihilation, the three decades since the war have witnessed major convulsions in all the great powers, together with endless violence on the periphery of the world system.

In the East the last act of the Bolshevik Revolution is being played out: the conversion of Soviet Russia into a gigantic authoritarian welfare state, with or without the restoration of private property. In the West the international currency and energy crises, the great inflation, and the current turn into recession clearly show the bankruptcy of the Keynesian liberal state, and throughout the advanced countries the attempted synthesis of all classes and groups in the parliamentary reformist state is breaking down. If it is true that in almost all countries, labour has accepted the bourgeois state and become merely one sectional interest among others in the existing society, it is also true that it is in conflict with these other sectional interests, and the field of conflict is widening.

A century after the foundation of the modern worker's movement, anarchism's main competitors stand condemned by history. Both glibly dictatorship and parliamentary reformism have had their chance and as the libertarian wing of the International Workingmen's Association predicted, they have both failed when measured against the aim common to both wings of the classical workers' movement. Moreover, with them also lies a large share of the responsibility for the twentieth century holocaust. If today various micro-factions of left labourites and revolutionaries, banished to obscure doctrines that were already out of date in 1930, it is

because they have learnt nothing from the last fifty years: nothing from Berlin, Kronstadt, Budapest and Prague, nothing from Belsen and Workuta; nothing from Stalin and Hitler.

Anarchism suffered the fate of any doctrine ahead of its time. It made the proletarian revolution its central concept at a time when the bourgeois revolution had not yet happened for the bulk of mankind. It was only the beginning of this century that saw a steady world-wide growth of anarchish and syndicalist organisations, a rise against which all factions of the so-called socialist international closed their ranks. The world historical significance of the Russian Revolution was that it split the revolutionary left and crippled the anarchist and syndicalist movements.

In terms of its effects, the Third or Communist International was a profoundly counter-revolutionary organisation. It destroyed its revolutionary competitors: the anarchists and syndicalists - but it put nothing in their place. The Industrial Workers of the World in America, the Shop Stewards Movement in England, the Revolutionary Shop Stewards in Germany - all were destroyed; they have yet to rise again. Nor was this destruction purely organisational: by the time of the Nazi-Soviet pact, then Stalin gave Hitler several hundred foreign communist refugees for execution; the Gestapo and G.P.U. were gunning down anarchist militants all over Europe and America.

Whilst modern anarchism recognises its descent from the revolutionary libertarian wing of the first workers' international, and its kinship with those libertarian militants who survived the onslaught of Stalinism and fascism in the twenties and thirties and the general destruction of the Second World War, it arises principally from a critical reflection on the experience of the socialist bloc and on the irrelevance of labour, socialist and communist parties in the advanced West. Of the proletarian revolutions this century: Russia 1906-1917, Kronstadt 1921, Asturias 1934, Spain 1936, East Berlin 1953, Poznan 1953, Hungary 1956, France 1968 - all

except one started independently of the socialist and communist parties, only three gained the support of such parties and the majority were suppressed by socialist and communist parties. Such treachery, covering as it does a whole historical epoch, cannot be blamed on the characteristics of this or that individual leader: it is an essential characteristic of such parties.

For this reason the central task of the revolutionary movement is the creation of flexible democratic organisation, united by a common programme, strategy and analysis, rather than by subordination to a common centre, uncompromised by automatic support for external power-political interests, and having sections capable both of independent action and of unity on a joint action programme with other sections. It is as a first step to such an organisation that the following document adopted by the January national conference of the Federation of Australian Anarchists is put forward.

FAAB No. 4, March/April 1975
Rabelais, Vol. 9, No. 1

FAAB = Federation of Australian Anarchists Bulletin, Rabelais = La Trobe University student newspaper

ORGANISATIONAL PLATFORM

MEMBERSHIP

The Federation consists of those groups and individuals in Australia who

(a) are opposed to both capitalism and state socialism;

(b) accept the possibility and desirability of libertarian socialism, i.e. a co-operative and egalitarian social economy without the state;

(c) reject the view that the state, i.e. police, army, parliament and bureaucracy, is the decisive instrument for the achievement of a libertarian social order; and

(d) accept the necessity of co-operation, planning and organisation for the

The central task of the revolutionary movement is the creation of flexible democratic organisation united by a common programme, strategy and analysis rather than by subordination to a common centre, uncompromised by automatic support for external power-political interests, and having sections capable both of independent action and of unity on a joint action programme with other sections.

achievement of anarchist aims.

AIMS

(a) to struggle against statist, sexist, ageist and authoritarian conceptions in all spheres of social life.

(b) to prepare the theoretical, ideological, cultural, moral and material-organisational prerequisites for effective and permanent popular self-government in future crises.

(c) to propagate the general idea of libertarian socialism.

(d) to initiate, assist and participate in practical struggles for partial objectives on the basis of their relationship to libertarian socialist aims and objectives.

(e) to foster the development of the world anarchist movement both through building a strong Australian section and through mutual aid and discussion with other national sections.

STRUCTURE

(1) Affinity Groups

The basic units of the organisation are cells or affinity groups composed of either:

(a) persons engaged in a common occupation, working in a common institution or having a common status, e.g., shop stewards groups, student and teacher groups, women's groups, etc.

(b) persons engaged in common specialised work for the movement or having common interests, e.g., publishing groups, research groups, prisoners aid groups, etc.

(c) persons living or working in a common locality.

(2) Regional Associations

The cells or affinity groups in a given geographical region should form a regional association for purposes of mutual aid and discussion and for organising general propaganda. In areas

where there are not functionally differentiated groups, regional associations should be formed in order to bring anarchists and sympathisers together and in this and other ways facilitate the emergence of affinity groups.

(3) National Sub-Sections

Affinity groups may also unite, nationally or regionally, on the basis of common occupation, interest, status or program, to form sub-sections of the federation.

(4) Corresponding Members

Each group - affinity, regional or national - should designate a member for correspondence with the rest of the movement. If the names and addresses of such corresponding members cannot be published openly they should still be held by the group producing the internal bulletin and also the corresponding member of each regional association or national sub-section within the federation should keep the names and addresses of the corresponding members of its component cells or affinity groups.

(5) Individual Members

Although it is desirable that members belong to an affinity group (or several), they may be attached directly to either a regional association, a national sub-section or the federation itself in the absence of suitable local-groups.

(6) Any individual member or component group can contact any component group of the Federation either directly or if necessary through the medium of the internal bulletin or system of corresponding members.

(7) Any individual member or component group may place articles or statements in the internal bulletin, or, in case of space limitations, have articles or statements distributed together with the internal bulletin.

(8) Any component group may call a conference of all federation members, of all anarchists in a particular region, or of all anarchists active in a particular

type of affinity group, and have the conference advertised through the internal bulletin or invitations issued through the system of corresponding members.

(9) Any affinity group may hold meetings with other affinity groups, or between its delegate and the delegates of other affinity groups and have the invitations issued through the system of corresponding members.

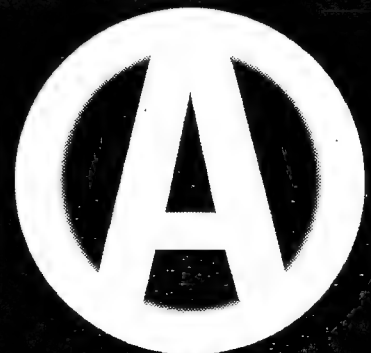
CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

1. No decision can be made or statements issued in the name of the federation. All statements and decisions are made in the name of the conference of individuals or meeting of group delegates making them.

2. National and Regional anarchist conferences are open to all members and decisions have only the force of recommendations, being not binding on members or component groups.

3. Meetings between revocable delegates with a mandate from their affinity group may make decisions binding on the groups they represent on the specific matters for which they have a mandate.

(FAAB, No. 3, Jan-Feb 1975) (Also in Rabelais, Vol. 9, No. 1.)





Having just presented an article arguing the need for a regional anarchist federation, we now present information on how to organise one of the basic units of anarchist organisation: the affinity group.

What is an Affinity Group?

An affinity group is a small group of 5 to 20 people who work together on direct action or other projects. You can form an affinity group with your friends, people from your community, workplace, or organization. Affinity groups challenge top-down decision-making and organizing, and empower those involved to take creative direct action.

Affinity groups allow people to "be" the action they want to see by giving complete freedom and decision-making power to the affinity group. By nature, affinity groups nature are decentralized and non-hierarchical, two important principles of anarchist organizing and action. The affinity group model was first used by anarchists in Spain in the late 19th and early 20th century, and was re-introduced to radical direct action by anti-nuclear activists during the 1970s, who used decentralized non-violent direct action to blockade roads, occupy spaces and disrupt "business as usual" for the nuclear and war makers of the US. Affinity groups have a long and interesting past, owing much to the anarchist workers of Spain and the anarchists and radicals today who use affinity groups, non-hierarchical structures, and consensus decision making in direct action and organizing.

Affinity Group Roles

There are many roles that one could possibly fill. These roles include:

- Medical - An affinity group may want to have someone who is a trained street medic who can deal with any medical or health issues during the action.
- Legal observer - If there are not already legal observers for an action, it may be important to have people not involved in the action taking notes on police conduct and possible

violations of activist's rights.

- Media - If you are doing an action which plans to draw media, a person in the affinity group could be empowered to talk to the media and act as a spokesperson.

- Action Elf/Vibes-watcher - This is someone who would help out with the general wellness of the group: water, massages, and encouragement through starting a song or cheer. This role may not always be necessary, but may be particularly helpful in day long actions where people might get tired or irritable as the day wears on.

- Traffic - If it is a moving affinity group, it may be necessary to have people who are empowered to stop cars at intersections and in general watch out for the safety of people on the streets from cars and other vehicles.

- Arrest-able members - This depends on what kind of direct action you are doing. Some actions may require a certain number of people willing to get arrested, or some parts of an action may need a minimum number of arrest-ables. Either way, it is important to know who is doing the action and plans on getting arrested.

- Jail Support - Again, this is only if you have an affinity group who has people getting arrested. This person has all the arrestees contact information and will go to the jail, talk to and work with lawyers, keep track of who got arrested etc.

History of Affinity Groups

The idea of affinity groups comes out of the Spanish anarchist workers' movement of the late 19th and early 20th century. The Spanish anarchist movement provides an exhilarating example of a movement fighting for a society based on the anarchist



The anarchists were doing a better job of getting along than anyone could have hoped for.

principles of direct action, self-management and solidarity, and of the affinity group as being one important vehicle for this struggle.

Small circles of good friends, called



"tertulias", would meet at cafes to discuss ideas and plan actions. In 1888, a period of intense class conflict in Europe and of local insurrection and struggle in Spain, the Anarchist Organization of the

Spanish Region made this 'traditional' form (tertulias) the basis of its organization. Decades later, the Iberian Anarchist Federation, which involved 80,000 activists, organized into affinity groups and confederated into local, regional, and national councils.

Wherever several FAI affinity groups existed, they formed a local federation. Local federations were coordinated by committees made up of one mandated delegate from each affinity group. Mandated delegates were sent from local federations to regional committees and finally to the Peninsular Committee. Affinity groups remained autonomous as they carried out education, organized and supported local struggles. The intimacy of the groups made police infiltration difficult.

In July 1936, Francisco Franco, with a group of fascist generals, launched a military revolt to take power from Spain's government. Spanish workers and peasants armed themselves and defeated the military throughout much of the country, particularly in Anarchist strongholds. Millions of Spaniards took action to restructure society along revolutionary lines, not revive the treacherous Spanish government. Factories, transportation, telephones and even wholesale and retail stores were taken over and run collectively; an estimated 1200-1800 self-managed workers' collectives were formed.

Workers' self-management effectively replaced the remnants of government and private institutions, providing the everyday necessities of life - food, clothing, shelter, and public services. The experience of working in non-hierarchical affinity groups (and unions) created the conditions for 6 million people in Spain to reorganize society along revolutionary principles, organizing workplaces, agriculture, and communities without

bosses and government.

The idea of large-scale affinity group based organization was planted in the United States on April 30, 1977 when 2,500 people, organized into affinity groups, occupied the Seabrook, New Hampshire nuclear power plant. The growing anti-nuclear power and disarmament movements adopted this mode, and used it in many successful actions throughout the late 1970s and 1980s. Since then, it has been used by the Central America solidarity movement, lesbian/gay liberation movement, Earth First and earth liberation movement, and many others.

Most recently, affinity groups have been used in the mass actions in Seattle for the WTO and Washington DC for the IMF and World Bank, as well as Philadelphia and Los Angeles around the Republican and Democratic National Conventions.

What is a Cluster and a Spokescouncil?

A cluster is a grouping of affinity groups that come together to work on a certain task or as part of a larger action. Thus, a cluster might be responsible for blockading an area, organizing one day of a multi-day action, or putting together and performing a mass street theater performance.

Clusters could be organized around where affinity groups are from (example: Texas cluster), an issue or identity (examples: student cluster or anti-sweatshop cluster), or action interest (examples: street theater or lockdown).

A spokescouncil is the larger organizing structure used in the affinity group model to coordinate a mass action. Each affinity group (or cluster) empowers a spoke (representative) to go to a spokescouncil meeting

to decide on important issues for the action. For instance, affinity groups need to decide on a legal/jail strategy, possible tactical issues, meeting places, and many other logistics. A spokescouncil does not take away an individual affinity group's autonomy within an action; affinity groups make their own decisions about what they want to do on the streets (as long as it fits in with any action guidelines.) All decisions in spokescouncils are made by consensus, so that all affinity groups have agreed and are committed to the mass direct action.

How to start an affinity group

An affinity group could be a relationship among people that lasts for years among a group of friends and activists, or it could be a week long relationship based around a single action. Either way, it is important to join an affinity group that is best suited to you and your interests.

If you are forming an affinity group in your city or town, find friends or fellow activists who have similar issue interests, and thus would want to go to similar actions. Also, look for people who would be willing to use similar tactics - if you want to do relatively high risk lockdowns, someone who does not want to be in that situation may not want to be in the affinity group. That person could do media or medic work, but it may not be best if they are completely uncomfortable around certain tactics of direct action.

If you are looking to join an affinity group at a mass action, first find out what affinity groups are open to new members and which ones are closed. For many people, affinity groups are based on trusting relationships based around years of friendship and work, thus they might not want people they don't know in their affinity group. Once you find which affinity groups

are open, look for ones that have an issue interest or action tactic that you are drawn to, like a Free Tibet affinity group or a blockade affinity group.

What can an affinity group do?

Anything! They can be used for mass or smaller scale actions. Affinity groups can be used to drop a banner, blockade a road, provide back-up for other affinity groups, do street theater, block traffic riding bikes, organize a tree sit, change the message on a massive billboard, play music in a radical marching band or sing in a revolutionary choir, etc. There can even be affinity groups who take on certain tasks in an action. For instance, there could be a roving affinity group made up of street medics, or an affinity group that brings food and water to people on the streets. What makes affinity groups so effective for actions is that they can remain creative and independent and plan out their own action without an organization or person dictating to them what can and can't be done. Thus, there are endless amounts of possibilities for what affinity groups can do. Be creative and remember: direct action gets the goods!

Consensus Decision Making: What is it?

Consensus is a decision making process based not on "majority rule," but the greater agreement of the community. Instead of a majority making a decision for the group, all people in the decision making body have equal voice and power. Consensus is reached when all members of a group, committee, or organization agree that a proposal is best for the group; individuals may not agree with everything in the proposal, but a commitment to community building and needs makes consensus work.



Why do it?

We use consensus for many reasons. It allows people to collectively explore solutions until the best one for the group emerges. Consensus assures that everyone has a voice in the decision making process, synthesizing all ideas into one plan that all participants agree to implement.

What makes affinity groups so effective for actions is that they can remain creative and independent and plan out their own action without an organisation or person dictating to them what can and can't be done. Thus, there are an endless amount of possibilities for what affinity groups can do.



Barry and Dave agreed to disagree as to who got to throw the last remaining molotov cocktail.

Since all participants agree to the decision, people are more invested in carrying out what has been decided. The process promotes commitment to carry out decisions.

Consensus is important in allowing

minority opinions and concerns to be heard and considered, and encourages cooperation among people with divergent views. It attempts to minimize domination and empowers the community in the process of making a decision.

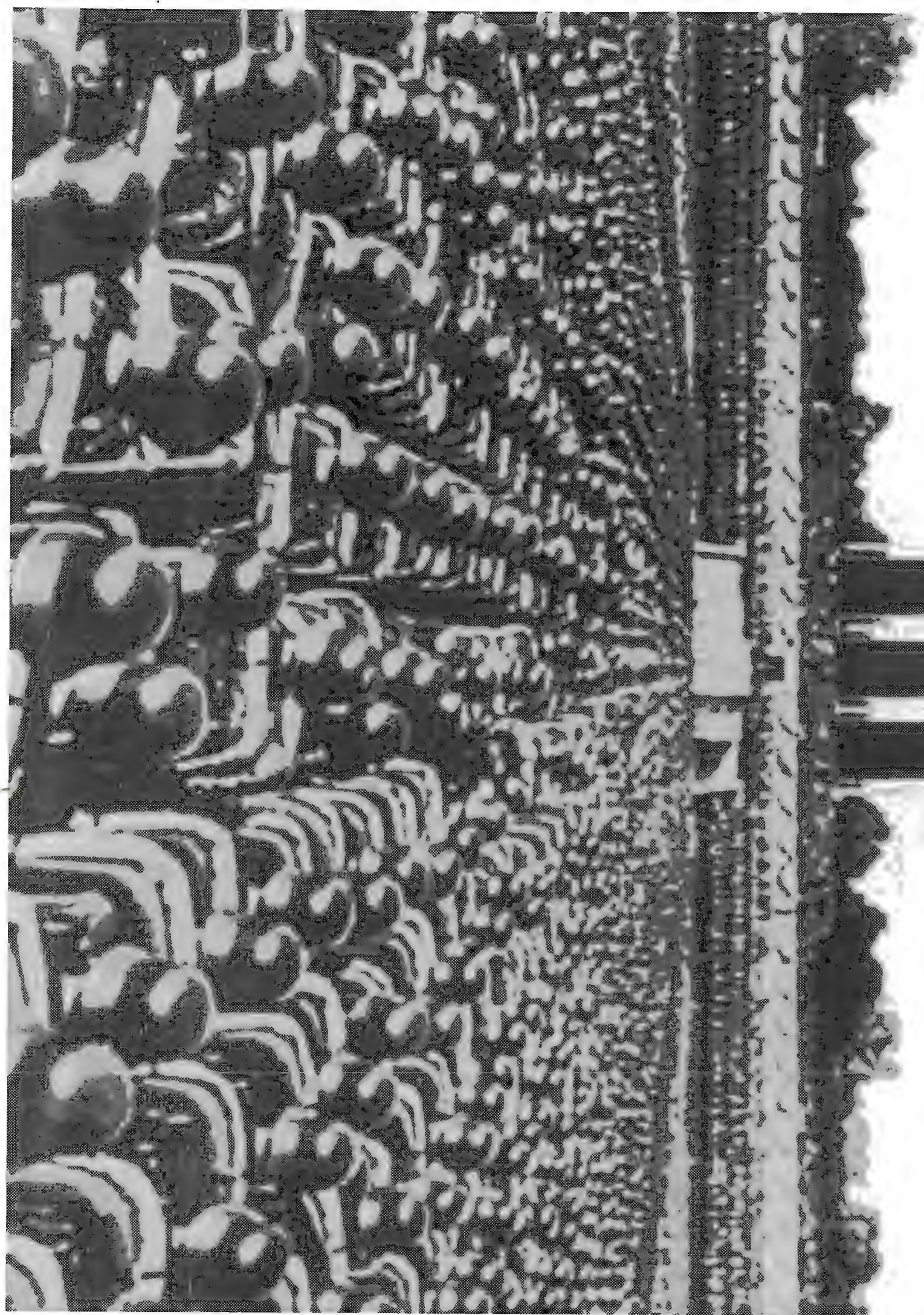
How do we do it?

First, a group must define the issue: what needs to be decided. Next, discuss the issue. After the group has had enough time to discuss the item, someone makes a proposal (some proposals may be brought to a meeting beforehand) for a specific plan of action. The facilitator can ask for a proposal if she/he feel that people are repeating the same points.

After a proposal is made, people can offer clarifying questions. This is not the time to speak for or against the proposal.

Then, list out all concerns people may have with the proposal. Attempt to resolve each individual concern through further discussion or amendments to the proposal. If there are no concerns, there is consensus. The facilitator will ask for any *stand asides*. People who stand aside have concerns that have not been resolved, but will not block from moving forward. The facilitator will then ask if there are any *blocks*. People who block have serious concerns that have not been resolved and cannot allow the decision to be made by the group; blocks are serious decisions, and they must be based on a belief that the proposal being put forward goes against the principles of the group or organization. If a block happens, the group will need to re-evaluate how to proceed. If there are no blocks, there is consensus.

*Slightly adapted from the article on the Quebec Stop the FTAA website: http://www.stopftaa.org/activist/act_ag.html

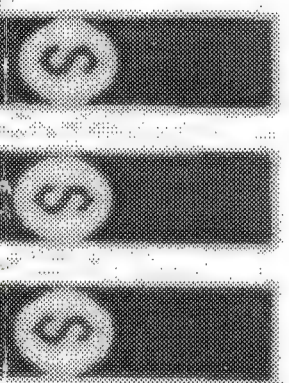


“ Naturally the common people don't **Want** war: **neither** in Russia, **nor** in England, **nor** for that matter in Germany. That is understood. But, after all, it is the **leaders** of the country who determine the policy and it is always a **simple matter** to drag the people along, whether it is a **democracy**, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. **Voice or no voice**, the people can **always** be brought to the **bidding** of the **leaders**.

That is easy.

All you have to do is tell them they are being **attacked**, and denounce the **peacemakers** for lack of **patriotism** and exposing the country to danger. It works **the same** in any country. ”

- Hermann Goering, Hitler's #2 man,
shortly before being sentenced to
death at the Nuremberg trials.





The following article is taken from the anarchist pamphlet 'Against War & Terrorism', copies of which are available from Barricade or on the web. No war between nations, no peace between classes!

Building an Antiwar Movement

It's easy to feel despair, isolation and frustration at what's presented to us as an inevitable drive into an indefinitely long war. The key ingredients of success in building a successful anti-war movement are confidence in ordinary people's potential, solidarity with each other and a long-term view: we have not been able to prevent the first bombs falling, but over time we can reverse the dynamic and stop the war.

Historical experience - desertion and mutinies at the end of World War I, the international movement against the war in Vietnam, the anti-nuclear movement of the 1980s - shows that movements can stop or divert even large-scale processes of militarisation, but only when large numbers of ordinary people are actively involved. The experience of active involvement in turn gives people more confidence in their own capacities to think and act for themselves, which is an important element in building a better world. This means:

1. Making space for a diversity of voices within the movement. To insist on expressing only the most radical line will isolate activists at the very time when many ordinary people are looking for a way out. To insist on being as "mainstream" as possible will stop the movement developing and restrict participation to a small section of the population. So a good "platform" will include as wide a range of anti-war voices as possible. This enables the movement to speak to different people and is part of learning from each other.

2. Making sure that the movement emphasises activities which everyone can take part in. It's important to remember that most actions don't have an immediate chance of stopping the war; but if they give people a chance to learn how to become active, to gain confidence and to develop their own understanding, they can help build a movement that does have a chance.

3. Taking care that the movement isn't run by a handful of experienced people to the exclusion of everyone else. While activists may have particular skills, their job is to share them and pass them on. Stopping this war is likely to be a long



campaign, so we will need to develop everyone's ability to take part at every level.

In terms of strategy, it's important for people to mobilise within their own everyday contexts, both to root the

movement in the real world and to change the existing social relationships that ultimately give rise to war. While the movement will also need to reach out into public space and develop a "political" face, this shouldn't become separate from the rest of the movement. The

In terms of strategy, it's important for people to mobilise within their own everyday contexts, both to root the movement in the real world and to change the existing social relationships that ultimately give rise to war. The point is for ordinary people to politicise themselves, not to develop a separate political élite.



point is for ordinary people to politicise themselves, not to develop a separate political élite. In practice, what we need to do is:

1. Start by talking to other people at work, in the shops, at home, on the bus,

in school, online - anywhere where people already know us. This may seem challenging at times, but it's becoming clear that far more people are uneasy about the prospect of war than the media leads us to think. By opening up this new space for communication, we undermine some of the usual power relationships and create space for new kinds of solidarity and friendship.

2. Offer people immediate, practical things to do: signing something, going on a march, coming to a meeting, putting up posters, circulating a letter. We're trying to "push people's boundaries" enough so that they feel they are becoming active, but not so much that they see activism as beyond their reach.

3. Encourage people to take the next step, and support them if they don't yet know how: ask them to speak at meetings or write leaflets, help them to put press releases or websites together, show them how to organise a public meeting or a march. Be careful of patronising people: the trick is to be confident that they can do whatever they set their mind to, and make sure they have the backup they need to do it. The second time somebody does something, we should leave them to it!

4. Educate ourselves: this movement is likely to last a long time, and most of us are going to have to find out more about all kinds of issues, from foreign policy to Islam to international law. This also gives us a chance to build connections by inviting speakers from other groups, from local Muslim associations to college lecturers to development organisations.

5. Make links: although (almost) anyone who opposes war should be welcomed, we should work and argue for making links to other issues, most importantly foreign policy, "development" and world economics, racism and intolerance, and civil liberties. To stop the war and leave the system ready for another war tomorrow is not enough.

6. Try to spread the movement, rather than build little empires. Encourage people to take independent action (and support them when they do); work to create networks between different groups and

initiatives, without imposing a single "line" that everyone has to follow.

This war may run for years in various forms, and a movement that can stop it will need to include many different social groups. So there's space for all sorts of different action, and it's important to respect this, because it's how new people will both find their way to the movement and how other people can contribute something we might not have thought of. Different actions also have different purposes (though some overlap):

Convincing ordinary people: meetings, posters, demos, street theatre, leaflets, videos, etc. Building the movement: newsletters, mailing lists, teach-ins, websites, gatherings, benefit gigs, etc. "Stopping the machine in its tracks": 5-minute strikes for peace, occupations, peace observers, supporting deserters, blockades, etc. Influencing governments or the media: petitions, vigils, press releases, photo opportunities, etc.

We learn as movements, not just as individuals, and the dialogue between us is important. There is no book that can tell us authoritatively how we are going to stop this war; it's something we will work out together in practice. We can certainly learn from other movements and past history (several campaigns have produced excellent "how-to" guides that are a real goldmine of ideas), but at the end of the day none of us knows exactly what will work, and we won't know until we've managed to stop the war (if then!). In the process, though, we are also learning something else of immense value: how to treat each other as equals, how to cooperate and communicate without bosses and laws, and how to build the kind of world that we want to live in.

Laurence Cox (Dublin) has been involved in social movements for nearly 30 years, including opposing the Falklands War, the nuclear arms race and the second Gulf War. He's an academic specialist in social movements research, currently studying working-class community politics in Ireland.

flag.blackened.net/revolt



An important part of the anarchist project in Australia involves repairing the damage caused by white colonisation and the attempted genocide of indigenous peoples. As Owen Gager argues in the following article, part of this process involves critically examining the issue of sovereignty and how it relates to the struggle for a classless, non-hierarchical society.

Aboriginal Sovereignty: an Anarchist Critique

Some people within the anarchist community are now, after looking, understandably, at the expropriations of the Aboriginal people as the basis of existing white settler state and economy, trying to appeal to the concept of "sovereignty" as the basis for an anarchist conception of Aboriginal struggle, a struggle they see as crucial to ending Australian capitalism. In taking this course, however, they follow the dominant rhetoric of the campaigns promoted by the state-funded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Commission (ATSIC), the rhetoric that is, of those who claim to be Aboriginal leaders.

In looking at Aboriginal society, we are looking at a form of society which long antedates our own. The concept of "sovereignty", as it has developed in Western (white) political theory, takes its point of departure from an analysis of such early societies, "societies without government", as the English writer Hobbes called them. Hobbes characterised these societies as sites of "war of all against all". Such societies, it is claimed, are unsustainable as social entities and provide for their members only radical insecurity which threatens life and property. In Hobbes' theory, the earliest statement of what sovereignty means apart from Bodin's, this "war of all against all" can only be ended through a "contract" with a sovereign - a King, a parliament, or a "Lord Protector" such as Oliver Cromwell. This is, for Hobbes, sovereignty. This "contract", very much like the Newstart Activity Agreement and other Centrelink creations, is a contract which gives one party, the sovereign, all power, and the other parties to the contract the 'right' to obey. As a theory of a state totally irresponsible to its subjects because the alleged alternative is chaos, or "anarchy", it prefigures fascism and colonialism.

Readers of Peter Marshall's *Demanding the Impossible* will notice both extreme similarities and extreme dissimilarities with Hobbes. Most pre-twentieth century anarchist writers envisaged anarchy as the continuance of natural laws carried over from the very earliest societies, where the "natural rights" of men and women were respected and guaranteed, as outcomes of consensus in a society



where each person knew everyone else. The state, when it arose, shattered these existing non-contractual rights, destroyed existing natural law with unjust edicts by all-powerful rulers, for whom, in Randolph Bourne's words, "war is the health of the state". The tranquility of a natural society is overthrown by a "war of all against all" as states dragoon ordinary people into wars for extensions of state power and territory. For both Hobbes and his anarchist opponents, "sovereignty" and "anarchy" are diametrically opposed ideas. The differences are over the content of these concepts.

40,000 Years is a Long, Long Time...

The problem with both kinds of theory is that they are based on myth rather than history. There is no historical record of a "social contract", in the form Hobbes envisaged, ever being agreed to on a specific time at a specific date. Conversely, the search for early societies which gave equal rights to all genders, and had no record of eradication of non-human animal species, has not produced large numbers of early utopias. Nor has the geographical spread of the social principles of these few model societies always extended very far or for very long. One can say, nevertheless, that most of the earliest societies of which there is some

Aboriginal societies have never needed such 'sovereignty', relying as they did and still do for their social cohesion on forms of consensus decision-making that long anticipated anarchists finding a name for the process. How can the form of liberation of any oppressed grouping be defined in its oppressor's language?



Aboriginal tent embassy, Canberra 1972.

record, including Australian Aboriginal societies, were not "chaotic" or unstable in Hobbes' sense; as we have noted, until undermined by external invasion, Australian Aboriginal society lasted a very long time indeed. The absence of a state and of employment and of money is characteristic of a great many early societies.

"Sovereignty" in international law arrived, like all written law, with white colonialism. It was in more ways than one the law of the conqueror; as international law it was an etiquette of conquest agreed on between rival conquerors. Imperialism immediately proclaimed the

"sovereignty" of the racist power it imposed, describing the pre-existing society as a Hobbesian chaos. Where, as in New Zealand/Aotearoa, a militantly undefeated indigenous majority confronted a white settler minority, this majority was told that they were "sovereign" – using a word for "sovereignty" unknown to most Maoris – and that "sovereignty" would be recognized in the "treaty" in which they agreed to sign sovereignty away to Britain. Once, as a consequence of this treaty, a white settler government was set up, which waged open and victorious war against the indigenous people, the "treaty" was declared a nullity since the Maoris suddenly were found not to have been "sovereign" when they signed it! The New Zealand treaty, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, is still not recognised.

It is this colonialist conception of "sovereignty" which "leaders" like Pearson and Langton want to enshrine in the "treaty" they now chatter about – a "sovereignty" which has never existed under white rule, which they will formally renounce by signing a treaty, in return for promises, which, like the Wik judgements, will never be kept.

Sovereignty & Globalisation

How relevant is any form of national sovereignty under conditions of transnational corporate globalisation? Clearly today, the national sovereignty even of existing "independent" states can be overruled by decisions and actions of transnational corporations backed by international economic bodies like the WTO, most obviously in freedom to make economic policy. The erosion of sovereignty through the absence and withdrawal of capital, which can take the form of a refusal of capital to employ, has been experienced by a would-be "aboriginal nation" pre-emptively as a strike on pastoral and mining capital in tropical Australia, following on court rulings giving Aboriginal workers equal pay.

The transnational corporations made explicit claims to a new form of sovereignty in the late 1960s (see *Global Reach*, available from Underclass Freedom Book Collective). This was the claim, in terms borrowed from neo-Keynesian economists like Benham, of

"consumer sovereignty", on its face a claim to a form of popular, not state, sovereignty. Here the illusory social contract of Hobbes found a new expression, the social contract as the contract between buyer and seller, a contract on the basis of which transnational corporations claimed power over and against the state as the only entity which allegedly could sell to the consumer what s/he "demanded". This claim is obviously tautological, since "consumer demand" is in turn defined as demand for what corporations produce, and can sell at a profit, while any other kind of demand (demands for basic commodities by the world's poor) is excluded by definition, as incapable of expression in a contract of sale, since the poor lack the income to buy.

Aboriginal "Sovereignty"

This definition of sovereignty has excluded Aboriginal people since the beginning of European settlement as too poor to buy what capitalism produces and committed to social forms of moneyless exchange. The new global definitions of sovereignty do not recognise states and nations. Even if they did, Aboriginal states are composed of a majority of poor citizens, excluded by definition from sovereignty. There have been less of those who view ATSIC as a precursor to an aboriginal state than as a kind of corporation, with a land base, provided by land rights legislation (Michael Mansell), a capital base, provided by the expropriation of aboriginal social security payments, and a labour force (forced unpaid labour of those deprived of social security payments). The existing Community Development and Employment Program (CDEP), which pioneered work for the dole in Australia already uses dole payments to some extent as capital, but still provides remuneration to workers and is not entirely conscriptive. The bulk of existing ATSIC funding is earmarked by the white government for CDEP programmes. CDEP is not a model of "consumer sovereignty" in that only a few consumer goods are produced for sale, but it is intended as a beginning. The problem of this model of "sovereignty", which attracts Pearson, Langton, and even Foley in a recent issue of *The Paper*, is that a corporation, especially

when the WTO's projected General Agreement on Trade and Services is introduced, can be taken over by another corporation. Unpaid unskilled forced labor is not unattractive to some multinationals. (This might even be a bit much for Noel Pearson, though one wonders.) It is no protection against TNC takeover to limit claims to sovereignty to political dimensions; nations, too, can be taken over, as many Australians have noticed. One must ask, indeed, if a white Australian sovereignty remains for aborigines to supplant.

Sovereignty, in its traditional political sense, is the ability of an elite to make laws with the backing of a standing army. Sovereignty is not government itself, but the physical and legal conditions for government. Once in place, such political sovereignty, placing beyond legal challenge government as a property-protecting agent, can be transferred to corporations. As the incarnation of property successfully protected, TNCs grow bigger than governments, subordinate them to themselves and base themselves more on economic than military power but with military power as an ultimate resort.

How can an anarchist endorse such a concept? Aboriginal societies have never needed such "sovereignty", relying as they did and still do for their social cohesion on forms of consensus decision-making that long anticipated anarchists finding a name for the process. How can the form of liberation of any oppressed grouping be defined in its oppressor's language?

Each distinct Aboriginal people has its own description of the relationship to the land which link it to a particular geographical area, in its own language. Although this is often now described as "traditional ownership", it is not ownership in the capitalist sense of a right to do what one pleases with the land. It involves duties to the land as well as rights, more duties, probably, in most cases, than rights. One might, in very Western terms, describe such relations to the land as expressed - if one knew, or were permitted to know, the languages in which they were expressed - as poetic popular ecologies. And why should not

ecology be expressed as poetry? If there is to be any claim to decide who may or may not enter a geographical area, it should be ecological, not political. (By "ecology" I do not mean a theory of "population pressure").

The argument between Aboriginal and white capitalist ways of life is about ways of life, not sovereignty. Ecology before economics. Consensus decision-making, not "leadership" by individual politicians, white or black. Moneyless economies based on mutual exchange, where no one is left hungry as resources are shared, instead of the creation of poverty for corporate power. Work reduced to a physical minimum not systematic overwork. Self-activity (collective not individual) not employment. Yes, we know Aboriginal society was neither a paradise, nor a utopia - that it had many problems, in many ecological and social areas. But, compared with the society we are now living in, its values, what it tried and may often have failed to do, were infinitely preferable to the society we now live in unhappily. Shouldn't that be what we are arguing about, not "sovereignty" - the imposition of the state on an anarchic people? The Aboriginal community leaders who fail to argue this - to present the dominant values of pre-European Aboriginal society as values that everyone, Aboriginal or not, can share and develop further - are, as their own people will tell them, not speaking after traditional discussion and debate, and are using whitefella language. It is not for anarchists to follow in the footsteps of any leaders, especially this kind.

The defence of Aboriginal society by raising issues such as sovereignty - which it is claimed, so far wrongly, can be contested in Australian or international courts - assumes that the issues of what society we choose to live in raised by the Aboriginal past and the issues of proletarianisation raised by the Aboriginal present can be somehow resolved by litigation. This is ridiculous. These kinds of issues are not resolvable in law but raise questions about the relevance of law to radical social change. The dispossession of the Aboriginal people is not an historic act which occurred illegally, in 1789. The wave of expropriations, of

land, of children, the now threatened expropriation of personal incomes, have been continuous and still continue. Talk of "sovereignty" addresses, at best, only one of these atrocities, historically the most distant. Such talk tells people, like the politicians in the old Wobbly song, that the quickest way to revolution is "talking constitution!". That is and has always been a lie.

Most Aborigines - with the exception of a few non-traditional leaders aspiring to be corporate CEOs - are now members of an unemployed underclass, who, unlike other unemployed, can look back to a past in which almost all capitalist relations were reversed. That early society arose, as it were, spontaneously, without conscious design - "natural", in the sense that it could not and did not make plans to prevent its overthrow, which it did not foresee. A future society, borrowing enormously from Aboriginal and similar societies, will be a product of planning and agreement between all members of the oppressed classes - especially because it will comprise not capo individuals but real, social individuals who will try to form a society in which the forms of the present total and overwhelming sovereignty of capital we now experience can never be repeated.

Anarchists respect Aboriginal societies, and other indigenous societies adhering to the same family of non-capitalist values, not because they are compelled somehow to do so by pre-existing forms of "sovereignty" but because they choose the values of indigenous over against non-indigenous societies. The social values of Aboriginal society were worked out by people for whom globalisation in its present form did not exist and was inconceivable. The new international underclass, the millions thrown out of "their" countries by political persecution and poverty - and facing concentration camps in the countries in which they seek refuge - is the living critique of and the new destructive force threatening capitalist globalisation. The insights of the new underclass, once meshed with the old, combine the future and past in ways that global capitalism cannot counter.

Owen Gager

What is a gang?



GANG IS A HIGHLY ORGANISED GROUP OR NETWORK CHARACTERISED BY A HIERARCHICAL
STRUCTURE AND IDENTIFIABLE LEADERSHIP USUALLY TERRITORIAL AND IDENTIFIABLE BY
MEMBERS OF SIMILAR OCCUPATION OR RACE, OFTEN ORGANISED AROUND

criminal activity



In late March and early April, several thousand activists descended on one of the detention centres established by Australia's racist regime near the small town of Woomera, in South Australia. Here is a Spanish companion and ex-Barricade collective member's account of what happened.

From Melbourne to Woomera

When I first heard about the Woomera protest, I got pretty enthusiastic about it although I didn't get involved until later. Now, I wish I had done it before. From here, I want to beg pardon to those 6, 7 or 8 people that nurtured the idea and also present them my congratulations and my admiration for having detected such a good issue, going a step forward on the last year protest.

The preparations have been a whole experience for me in the same way as the protest itself. That is why I want to talk about a bit of everything here.

BEFORE THE PROTEST

Observations

1. When I went to the first meeting, my first surprise was that out of 34 people, just 5 were representing groups. This is a very big difference in comparison with southern European or southern American way of organising. In fact, this is evidence of how individualist is the Anglo-Saxon culture. This culture is shown in the way people manages to organise themselves out of organisations and a whole lot of individuals get together and are able to organise whatever they want: s-ll, mayday, Woomera... Coming from Spain, it's been a cultural shock but also a good experience. There, the rate of groups and individuals is the opposite or even we would all come from organisations.

2. Another aspect that shocked me was the fact that everyone accepted to use the email list as a reference point and as a discussion place, leaving the meetings to organise practical stuff (campsite, resources, transport, etc). In a way, this is very effective: the meetings don't get stuck in empty debates that a lot of times don't take anywhere; it opens the running of the organisation to all the people that are interested but don't want to participate; it saves money to get in contact with other groups around Australia, or the world, and so coordinating stuff; it is, finally, the best way to open the communications to everyone.

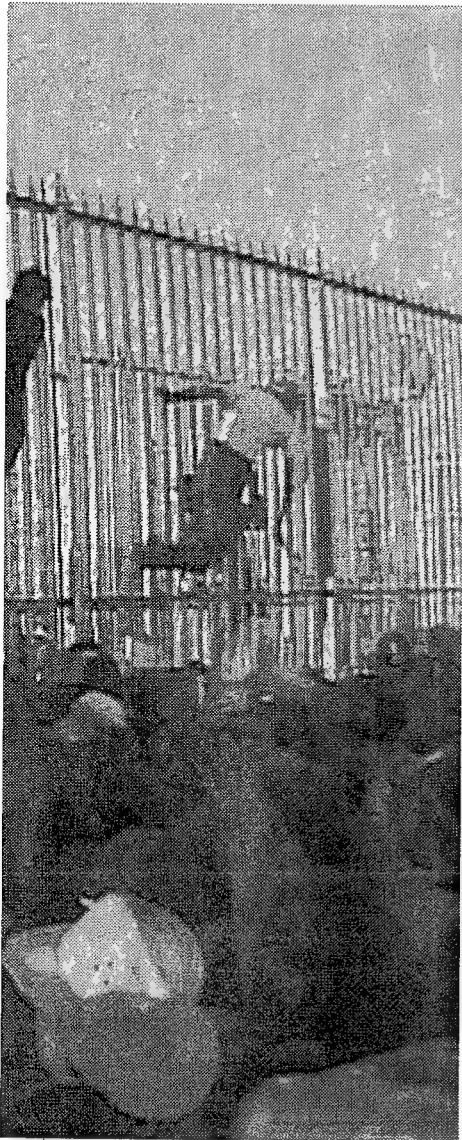
On the other hand, meetings lose one of their most important reasons to be: dis-



cussions and sharing of political ideas. Also, it leaves behind those people that don't have access to the Internet. That was my case and so, in the end, I feel that I have missed a 50% of the whole thing: discussions and information day by day. That doesn't mean that I have felt isolated, which is the opposite, I have felt completely into it as, fortunately, there were other ways of communications, as personal (the majority) and sometimes meetings.

3. Our group, the Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation (ASF) joined the fundraising group with other individuals. I should say about these fundraising events two things. First of all that Australians are not opened to other activities rather than daggy discos and bands, as the Latin party and the auction were a complete disaster. The only one thing that has seemed to set a precedent was the massages at the streets, with which we were able to raised \$140 the first time and \$800 the second time, when the

Those who are locked up are not because they are Afghanis or black; they lock them up because they are poor. In this sense, one sentence from one of the banners stuck in my head: we are victims of politics.



this and be more honest next time in terms of doing what we are committed to, at any level (low or high).

4. Another observation from this protest is that Melbourne seems to be the most organised and activist city around Australia. I think this is not the proper space to talk about it, as the reasons relate to history and culture. But in this sense, a few questions come to my mind: have other places done their best or have they put on Melbourne's shoulders all the responsibility? If that is the case, why? Why the entire infrastructure was Melbourne's responsibility? Isn't this a good opportunity for other places to organise and create movement? What would have happened to Melbourne meetings if there wasn't any "practical stuff" to organise apart from the buses?

Criticisms

1. There are very few things that have shitted me, but the most has been the use of the expression 'direct action' by political parties and corporate bureaucrat unions. When they said direct action, they wanted to mean actions. Behind Direct Action there is a whole philosophy that takes straight away to anarchism. This means that the people is able to organise and take over all life ambits without any representation or mediation: at workplace, at home, at government and so on; it is related to the idea of self-management. How can mediators talk about direct action if they are the opposite of it? Political parties, bureaucrats or official unions with paid members are a barrier to direct action as their role is to mediate between the people and people's responsibilities, stealing their capacity to do them. In fact, it is through direct action how we will get rid of them.

2. Despite the above, the preparation for the protest and the spokescouncils were totally non-hierarchical. Everyone could do, could speak, could suggest... that is direct action: people organising themselves in order to change their own lives in their own way, deciding their future without leaving the responsibility in second hands. There were voices saying that there was a hierarchy in those spokescouncils. Those voices came from those

who were trying to spoil this way of working by trying to show that it was not democratic. In fact, it was not democratic, it was more than that, it was anarchic (another evidence of the fact that, after the fail of the big ideologies like Marxism and Socialism, the way new social movements organise are with anarchist principles).

Another evidence of how free people was to work for this protest, was the fact that everyone could organise his or her own affinity group, taking the commitment. It's very funny for me to see how lazy people see leadership in those who take and make commitments. It's very easy to criticise sitting in front of the computer, but maybe it is not so easy to put posters up or to take "homework" after meetings as that compromises private's lives. I just ignore these voices. I guess we are so used to leave our responsibilities to outer structures that when, in this circumstances, our equals do them we call them leaders. That is not fair.

3. One mistake that we made during the organisation and the protest was to think and to talk twice and three times the same thing over and over. One example is Thursday during the day, at Woomera, when the police was trying to kick us out of the camp area. There were people scared, trying to move the camp until more people came. Well, as many people were saying that day, the choice is made from the very beginning people decide to make the journey. The principal activity during any kind of massive protest is to resist. Because we resisted, we could stay there the three following days. All what I'm trying to say is that, through the preparation and the protest, some of people's fears were brought to the meetings, making other people scared and some other people bored, talking about issues again and again that must be solved in people's mind before going to a protest. It is not unlikely or weird to be scared; however, it should be something to talk about in the affinity group or with friends, not in meetings.

FEELINGS DURING THE PROTEST

Friday night was one of the most exciting and emotional experiences that I

medical group took over and did, obviously, a really great job. The second thing about it was the benefit gig with Tim Rogers and Bernard Fanning. The person that organised that gig wanted to have control over the money to be sure that it was used for what it was supposed. That created a bit of tension among us, but the thing is that we weren't able to give an image of responsibility and honesty when we didn't do the only one job that we were asked for: put posters up. We should learn from

have ever had. As everybody else, I wasn't expecting anything from that action and the evidence is that I went there in my thumbs[?].

I was holding one of the flares when people started to pull the fence down. I just couldn't believe my eyes. Absorbed, with my mouth and eyes widely opened, I stopped myself from running towards the fence until the flare was fully off; once this happened, I ran to help the people putting the sandbags on the barbed wire and then ran towards the buildings. My happiness was increasing moment by moment. When I reached the second fence and I saw all the detainees with their banners, singing with us, trying to touch our hands, saying welcome, my happiness turned into rage. Rage towards what human beings can do against their equals, men, women and children: put them into cages, based on principles of sovereignty and economy. Those who are locked up are not because they are Afghani or black; they lock them up because they are poor. In this sense, one sentence from one of the banners stuck in my head: we are victims of politics.

When the detainees managed to jump over the third fence, when just one fence was between us, the feelings were more and more emotional, a lot of people started to cry. I didn't know what to say. Everything that came to my mind seemed so ridiculous in comparison with the situation that they were living that I just tried to show them that we were there to support them as much as we could.

And suddenly...they escaped!

The fact that they managed to escape makes a whole difference with the fact that we set detainees free. The majority of the detainees were much more politically experienced than us. In this sense, I should say that, definitively, the situation was bigger than us. Despite this, we managed to face it and we did a good job. If we had just imagined that this could have happened, we could have done a better job: setting everyone free, but that was impossible to imagine.

My rage turned again into happiness. Again I couldn't believe my eyes and



while I was pushing the police I was absorbed watching how many of them were going out. One sentence of one song came to my mind and stuck there during all the protest: if the fish of the fishbowl knew the sea, it would smash the glass, dying. Sad but true, it is impossible to compare the feeling of freedom with the one of pain or prosecution.

I couldn't fit inside me all my happiness. It was huge! Some people were worried or even sad, I can understand it, but I was happy: they've got a chance. A chance to live outside the barbed wire, a chance to sleep in a bed and wake up in a room or under a tree but not in a cage, a chance to try another country, a chance to fight, a chance to be free.

REFLECTIONS

I would like to finish with three reflections: one on the spokescouncils at Woomera, another one on the Aboriginal workshop on Saturday and, finally, what has happened after the protest up to now.

1. The spokescouncils at Woomera were chaotic and most of the time useless, making some people tired and introducing a feeling of disorganisation. This was a reason for a lot of people to leave the camp. Spokescouncils plus the principle of diversity of tactics got in contradiction with the fact that a whole lot of people were there doing something collectively.

As I understood, the idea was a dynamic

One sentence of one song came to my mind and stuck there during all the protest: if the fish of the fishbowl knew the sea, it would smash the glass, dying. Sad but true, it is impossible to compare the feeling of freedom with the one of pain or prosecution.

information sharing in which each group would tell what they want to do and people would follow it or not, but it wasn't an issue to discuss in the meetings. What really happened is that groups brought ideas, we discussed them but because there was not an obligation to come to an agreement, the discussion was closed saying that there was diversity of tactics and everyone could do what they want. The result of this was, firstly, that we didn't make spokescouncils as they were supposed to be; secondly, we wasted time and effort.

The reasons for this were:

- Diversity of tactics is a way of avoiding political discussion, which sometimes is necessary, more in Australia, where the majority of the collectives are very young.
- Nobody followed the idea of sharing information because, naturally, if we are doing something together, the desire is to do whatever actions together.
- Because the meeting is not thought as an authoritative organ in which the decisions must be followed, there was not willingness to come to collective decisions.
- The group was behind the spoke. That means that finally all the people was talking, not only the spoke; there was no need to individuals to organise in affinity groups as they could keep going to the meetings as individuals. The result is that there weren't spokescouncils, there were mass meetings.

2. Another reflection is on the workshop that Rebecca Winfield did about the Kokatha people. As I am really ignorant, I just can express my feelings about this.

When Rebecca started talking I felt that she was being arrogant and that she was talking to us as if she was above us. During all her speech she made me feel, for the first and only one time since I've been here in Australia, as a foreigner. But I was not the only one, as she was treating everyone like foreigners in her land. I wasn't understanding the reason for all her anger as there was a letter from her mother saying that we were

welcome and that the only one thing they could say is that we should respect the fact that they have been fighting there for many years.

When I started to say what I thought (what I am expressing here) not only she didn't let me talk but she asked the crowd to take me away as well, like if they were her slaves and I had been sentenced. Some people even woke up to take me but I didn't move. Too many times police, soldiers or guards have tried to take me away and they hadn't managed, I was not going to let people that I consider my friends to do it. She said I had offended her because I was not respecting her. I think that, after having listened to her, to express my feeling with sincerity and honesty is, in fact, an evidence of respect towards her. Under her point of view that was an offence. Under my point of view, she was not respecting us, from the moment she started to talk to us like crazy naïve children that didn't know what we were doing. She wasn't respecting a lot of people that was there with a lot of political experience. She wasn't respecting the detainees, taking them as poor creatures that didn't know where they were, as they needed someone to clean their asses to survive, without taking care about the fact that they've got a brain to think and some of them have suffer as much as Aboriginal people. The only one thing with which I agreed with her was that the best chance detainees had, was Aboriginal people, but it wasn't expected that they were going to escape, it was not even expected that we were going to be able to reach the inside fences. In fact, according to what one guy there said, in the whole Woomera process had been a lack of Aboriginal people's presence.

The respond to that from the people there was to kiss her ass, forgetting about their previous statements such as: if Aboriginal people don't allow us to go there we're going anyway. Another thing was the whole guilty feeling towards Aboriginal people, creating a new way of organising submitted to what Aboriginal people said. My country is the world and I am not going to feel foreigner anywhere because it is what I am fighting against.

You both should recognise that you're not guilty of what happened 200 years ago, that non-Aboriginal people are not English, they are Australians and that both have to fight together, learning from each other. If the fight is not a common fight, nor black, nor whites are going to be able to achieve what they want, which is, in fact, the same thing: freedom.

3. During the preparation of the protest I was missing a kind of discussion of what to do after it. Nobody seemed to care too much about it or, again, there was a fear to talk about the roots of the movement and talk about politics, which is what we've been avoiding all the time. The ASF-Melbourne took the initiative of suggesting a rally followed by a discussion. This was approved on the meeting before the protest. When we came back just No One Is Illegal seemed to support it. Finally neither the ASF, nor No One Is Illegal went neither to the rally nor to the discussion. So, what is the purpose of saying first, I want to do this and then don't even appear? To burn ourselves out? It doesn't make any sense! After seeing what happened on the 21st of April my feeling is that there is not a willingness to start creating a dynamic in the movement. Maybe it is easier to keep jumping from one issue to another, spontaneously, without any strategy, starting from the beginning again and again. If we are not strong enough to compromise our lives to change the world, another 2002 years of capitalism are waiting for us.

We've got the land already prepared to start growing fruits. That is one of the best achievements of Woomera, to have put the seeds for a strong structured alternative social movement. Now... do we want to grow them?

Receive my admiration all you people from the other side of the world, I am carrying a duty now: take your example, learn from it, keep fighting... until we win.

Marta



A year or two ago a member of the Barricade collective visited Spain and participated in the day-to-day activities of a free school known as Paideia. Here she presents a brief introduction to the ideas and practice of the school.

Paideia: 24 Years of Anarchist Education in South-West Spain

In 1977 a collective of anarchists – teachers, child psychologists, pedagogologists (roughly – people who study the art and science of teaching) and others – founded an Anarchist school "Paideia" (Greek for Education) in Merida, a town of around 50,000 people in the province of Extremadura, South-West Spain. The school began as a pre-school, and in the mid-80's extended; it's currently for kids from 2-15 years.

LOGISTICS

The school has an 'evolving' approach and every year (if not every day) adapts its techniques based on experience. The school is operated by a collective of adults – about half of whom are qualified teachers who work full time at the school – and half who visit and teach sometimes, come often in the evenings to help around the school and who contribute financially, from their outside incomes. This money pays the (on the basis of need) salaries of the teachers. The families are charged about AU\$200 a month which includes all materials, books, food, a bus each way and the schooling. No kids are refused because their families can't pay however – some wealthier families pay extra to cover this and sometimes a family works out a payment schedule.

There are currently about 80 kids at the school -

- The 2 and 3 year olds have pretty free play and sleep time. Everyone in the school loves the infants to bits and shows them with affection and hugs and kisses, however the development of their autonomy is emphasised: rooms are set up to facilitate this and they are rarely carried or held in laps. Greivances are usually solved with the question "would you like them to do that to YOU?" asked in various ways or acted out – till they admit that they wouldn't and so "shouldn't".

- The 4 and 5 year olds choose the activities they want to do and are guided through them. They have a weekly assembly with one kid facilitating and the rest expected to respectfully air greivances and offer opinions on what they want to do/study. They prepare

morning tea and afternoon tea for everyone and set and clear their own table for lunch.

- Group 3 are roughly 6-9 year olds so they're learning to read and write and do basic maths...some of them don't really want to study and want to play all the time and if they want to they can leave the group and wander a fair bit – though they can't come and go and be disruptive. Usually they choose to come though, because their friends do – and the necessity of learning the basics becomes obvious in daily life – when they can't read the notice board or work out how much stationery their group can choose, for example. And because the school has a culture of respect for, and excitement about, learning. A lot of the time they come to classes but chat and doodle and mess around. The teachers

make photocopied workbooks which go very slowly and repetitiously through the basics. They work through them at their own pace with guidance and help from the adult or from older kids. At the end of each term they choose what topics they want to study (when I was there they studied Euro conversions, geography - including a unit of globalisation/industrialisation/multinationals - world religions, reading, writing, art and botany – which was mostly outdoors). They participate in all other parts of the school with the older kids.

- Group 2 are roughly 10-12 year olds

- Group 1 are the oldest kids 12-15. Generally in the last two terms at the school the kids stay back until 9pm doing extra study which is specific to the high school curriculum they'll have to



The older kids have a very deep understanding of the school's conceptions of freedom, respect, justice etc and aim to live by these values freely – because they see how well they work and experience how good it can feel.

study the next year. Most of the kids do very well academically when they attend the state school – though often have problems adjusting to social stuff esp. finding the kids to be immature.

DAY-TO-DAY STUFF

The school day works like this:

9:30-10am school bus does a loop of town picking up the kids
10-11am physical work time – in a rotating system kids (6-15 years) are placed in groups with one student co-ordinating (all age groups have a go) – each day they do one of: garden work, yard work, inside tidying or kitchen duty
11am morning tea
11:15 first workshop/class or on Friday's Assembly
1pm kids in the kitchen duty group finish making lunch, set tables, serve first sitting (the infants, littlies, Group 1&2) at **2:30**, clear tables and serve second sitting of Groups 3, the adults and visitors (often past students). Everyone else does independent study till **1:30** then has free time – though competitive play is discouraged and often the subject of assembly debates
4pm workshop/class
5pm independent study
5:30 afternoon tea, tidying up and play time
6pm school bus picks up all the kids
6-9:30pm the adult collective stays at school doing any work that needs to be done, preparing, discussing, socialising.

The schedule changes pretty often – for example when one school building needs painting the kids might do that in the mornings for a week. When an extra assembly is needed it replaces the morning class. Twice a term (for about 2 weeks) the morning session is Presentation assemblies where the Group 1, 2 and 3 students present what they've learnt in the previous 2 weeks and answer questions on it.

The Assembly is where the self-management of the school occurs, and where kids raise grievances and learn/find ways to handle them. Over the years the expectations on each kid increases – so that everyone is expected to participate in facilitating, minute taking and

active discussion of issues in the assemblies. Votes do occur – but a close vote always means more discussion is needed. Items for the assembly are placed in a box during the week – usually if the item is felt by everyone else to be petty or bitchy – the person raising it is told so. Otherwise very heartfelt, honest and many times harsh discussion of problems occurs. The expectations on the kids seemed high to me – but I came to realise that the expectations are very individual and derived from very close knowledge of each child. Whilst the criticisms may be harsh, it is all delivered in an incredibly loving environment in which behaviour is rejected and never the child. At one point or other everyone is subject to criticism. There are various ways of dealing with a kid who won't try and change in response to problems – these change over time and are far from perfect. They include "mandar" which is a system of orders whereby a kid (at some point everyone, from what I was told) is deemed irresponsible and incapable of dealing with freedom – they are thus told what to do by the adults until the assembly agrees they can rejoin the collective. I'd like to add here that this point was very contentious amongst the anarchists I was living with and meeting outside school hours. The school collective are well aware of the issues. My Spanish really wasn't ever good enough to get a 100% explanation – and may be misrepresenting or misunderstanding it a little.

PHILOSOPHY

The founders and current adult collective of Paideia (there are 2 remaining original members) have studied, thought about and experimented with just about every stream of libertarian pedagogy you could come across. Their current practice is part of the evolving process and is considered to be quite unique to the current collective – ie. the group of people involved in the experiment. They do not actively preach anarchism – but rather operate the school according to anarchist values. The older kids have a very deep understanding of the school's conceptions of freedom, respect, justice etc and aim to live by these values freely – because they see how well they work and experience how good it can feel.

CRITIQUES

The Paideia adult collective came to the conclusion at the end of the last school year that they were producing young people who were very free... very good at being free – but not good at taking responsibility or at respecting others. They brought this to the first assembly this year and the collective agreed to try to live according to the following – which is displayed on the main notice board:

General Commitment of Responsible Freedom for all the Collective September 2001

For one person to be free, requires the capacity to co-exist with other different people with a sentiment of EQUALITY, SOLIDARITY, JUSTICE, MUTUAL AID, NON-VIOLENCE, RESPONSIBILITY AND FLEXIBILITY.

If a collective doesn't practice these kinds of relations IT ISN'T FREE.

For this, we consider:

THAT FREEDOM MUST BE FOUGHT FOR, NOT "GIVEN".

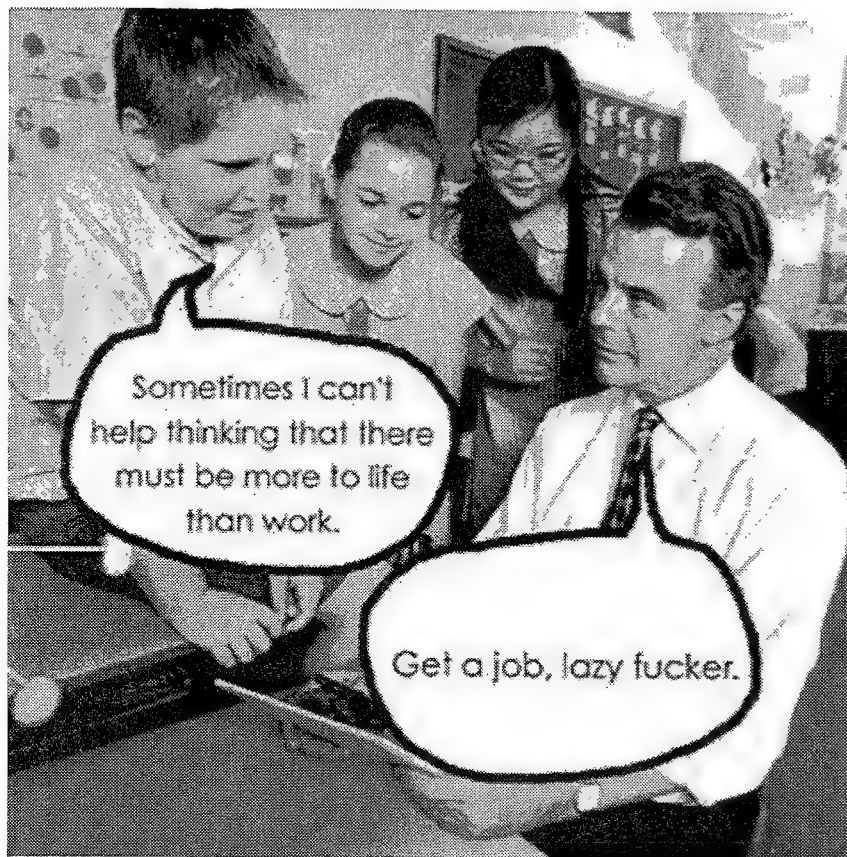
If it is given, it will build people who are:

EGOISTS
DISRESPECTFUL
INTOLERANT
DISCRIMINATING
UNJUST
LACKING SOLIDARITY
INSENSITIVE
UNAFFECTIONATE
IRRESPONSIBLE
IRRATIONAL
VIOLENT

Thus each person who wants to practise freedoms of:

MOVEMENT
CHOICE
RELATIONS
DECISIONS
SELF-MANAGEMENT

Must learn to LIVE and RELATE to others in a free manner and most of all they can't enjoy the advantages of a "given" freedom.



Whoever truly wants "to be free" must live conforming to this idea, when they feel they possess these values, they can manifest themselves freely.

Whoever desires to be free must struggle to achieve their liberty.

Whoever doesn't desire to be free lives conforming to a collective dependancy and submission.

.....

My observations, including a lot of discussion with the adult collective, and some group interviews with ex-students – is that Paideia turns out lovely, thinking people. People who are super sensitive to other people's needs and feelings. I think they are often a little shocked by how disrespectful, unjust, conformist etc people who haven't been to Paideia are. In this way, the school is a kind of

microcosm for how our communities might be, how we might relate to each other and enact a just system of self-management and direct democracy... except they're kids, and we all live in (and go home at the end of the day to) a world which is very different to this. The revolutionary potential of Paideia then, might be that the kids go home, and at 18 go out into the world with a way of living which influences all they come into contact with. To an extent I think this is true.

Another revolutionary potential might be the kids themselves leaving the school as revolutionary anarchists without all the baggage most authoritarian-educated anarchists carry round with them. If we're serious about community (and about rejecting the nuclear family!) then we need some age-structure . . . we need to keep people active in our movement after they have kids, need to include the

kids and give and receive with them the joys of community. We need to be creating second-generation anarchists. Imagine these kids coming into our communities with an expectation (and lifetime of experience) of truly democratic and respectful decision-making, an abhorrence of authority and a capacity to be free. However very few, if any of the Paideia kids go on to struggle in a political or activist sense. Somehow the sense of responsibility they have towards their collective...and later perhaps towards their families, friends, work-mates...doesn't extend to the rest of the world. The adult collective at Paideia is well aware of this: their only explanation is that happy, fulfilled children don't usually grow up to struggle against injustice in the world because they have little personal experience of injustice. Instead many end up trying to maintain the happiness and freedom of their time at Paideia.

I wouldn't argue that an Anarchist school should be like a production line for young activists – but I guess I would probably pro-actively arrange visiting workshops from activists and people from various struggles. I would probably also use more radical texts and videos in the school and continually emphasise how hollow your desire for justice is if you limit it only to your personal sphere.

But as the people at Paideia kept saying to me "Nadia es perfecta!" (Nothing is perfect!) and anyway, that Paideia should never be mimicked or replicated – it is very much of its time, place and people.

I hope to find ppl somewhere in Australia to start the planning for some kind of Anarchist or Libertarian school. I wonder whether an informal Free School (maybe in a squatted Social Centre?) for both kids (maybe home-schooling network, afterschool stuff) and adults (workshops, skillshare, reading groups, alterna-uni) might be a starting point – especially to establish a collective of committed people who could work together towards something bigger. If you're interested – get in touch.

Solidarity
Fiona Taylor
amagi74@yahoo.com

The Russian Revolution of 1917 produced a period of popular spontaneity and direct democracy paralleled few times in history. One of the myths maintained up to the present by some is the idea that the regime installed after October had some part in this, or otherwise reflected popular sentiment until ruined by Stalin. This article argues that the destruction of the popular revolution in Russia began much earlier.



Workers' Control After 1917

In 1917 two revolutions took place in Russia. The first took place in the factories and workshops of Russia and reflected the desire of many to resolve the fundamental problems associated with the system of wage labour. This revolution was carried out from the bottom up and manifested itself in the Factory Committee movement, whereby workers assumed responsibility for control of production — meaning that they ratified decisions made by management — or took them over altogether and ran them on the basis of workers' self-management.

The second revolution in Russia took place in the Kremlin, as the Provisional Government collapsed and was replaced by the Bolshevik seizure of power of 25 October. In contrast to the first, this was essentially an expression of Leninist ideology — which is to say, that which advocated the seizure of state power and the establishment of a so-called "dictatorship of the proletariat." This revolution was carried out from the top down and manifested itself in such acts as the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly and the establishment of a one-party Bolshevik dictatorship, as self-appointed representatives of the aspirations of the "working class."

In order to understand the evolution of the movement for "workers' control" in Russia and its subversion and eventual destruction at the hands of the Bolsheviks, it is necessary first to understand the fact that the two revolutions that took place in Russia from 1917 onwards were of a fundamentally different (or opposing) character. Whereas the former was a movement made the agency of the working class a practical reality on a day-to-day basis, the latter was a movement which used it in a rhetorical and opportunistic manner, supporting the concept insofar as doing so provided favourable circumstances for the political ambitions of the leaders of the Bolshevik party — Lenin in particular, but by no means alone. With a clash of ideology in the offing, it seems clear in hindsight that the future of "workers' control" should come down to a battle of wills, which is more or less what happened.

The use of the term "workers' control" itself in particular is instructive in understanding why socialism failed to appear in Russia, even despite the extraordinary



enthusiasm which accompanied the implementation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Maurice Brinton takes particular issue with the use of the term in describing the development of a socialist economy, noting that the issue of decision-making power in industry might well be regarded as that on which success or failure of a revolution is hinged.¹ What was

at issue was the extent to which the working class as a whole was "able — or prepared — to revolutionise the means of production?"

Was it willing to destroy the authority structure which the relations of production embody and perpetuate in all class societies? To what extent was it

prepared itself to manage production (and thereby the whole of society), or to what extent was inclined to delegate this task to others?²

The importance of the issue, so his argument goes, lay in the idea that, to borrow the words of Karl Marx, "socialism is man's [sic] positive self-consciousness."³ Without the power to exercise day-to-day decision-making power in the arena of production (which was the basis of free and equal access to resources, and thus of their material independence and freedom), the workers of Russia would be again subject to the exploitation inherent in class society, denoted by a separate managerial class who exercised totalitarian power and enjoyed the fruits of other people's labour. That the new managerial class called itself "communist" or claimed to be of the working class would be immaterial if these conditions were not met.

This, as Brinton further observes, was the fundamental problem faced by the Bolshevik party. Although the Bolsheviks relied on the most advanced sectors of the workers for their support and to legitimise the idea of the proletarian dictatorship (at least in the minds of those who stood to gain the most from it in terms of access to political power), their party was not in the hands of revolutionary workers, but rather political specialists who had neither the day-to-day contact with workers nor the experience of work itself.⁴ This failure to make ends consistent with means lead to a contradiction — namely, that "the real living forces that provided the strength of the party could not control it."⁵

The problems faced by the Russian Revolution after 1917 did not bring about this contradiction, they only served to exacerbate it . . . This is what rendered so futile most of the attempts made within the party by various oppositions between 1918 and 1921. They failed to perceive that a given ideological premise (the preordained hegemony of the Party) led necessarily to certain conclusions in practise.⁶

In other words, the fact that party members were not only organised as a separate and distinct class from the workers but also following their own political agen-



Red Army soldiers cross the ice to crush the Kronstadt Commune, 1921.

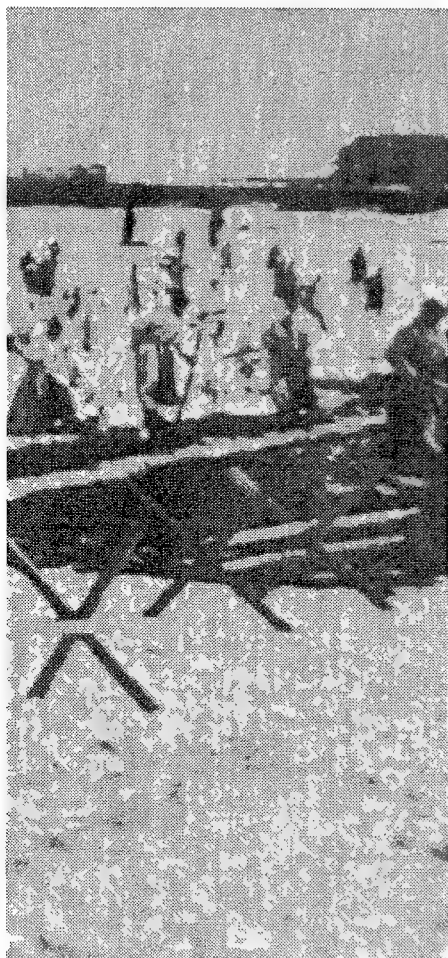
da, no less separate and distinct was a fundamental structural flaw. The existence of this flaw would mean that centres of organisation outside of the control of the Proletarian Dictatorship, centres such as the factory committees, could not be tolerated in the longer term — and as it turns out, weren't.

The first revolution, that of the factory committees, began after the February Revolution, a Constituent Assembly being established in amongst the chaos and disorder to replace the abdicating Tsar. Steve Smith argues that the factory committees were established primarily not with a view to establishing workers' self-management in line with any particular set of

philosophical ideals, but rather as a means of ensuring the continuation of production amid the general disarray.⁷ According to his account, the ambitions of the committees became more and more pronounced as the class war intensified and as the disorganisation of Russian society became more and more acute. The regime instituted by the Factory Committees, he argues, went from being "reactive, defensive and observational to being active, offensive and interventionist."⁸

From being concerned essentially to supervise production, workers' control developed into an attempt to actively intervene in production and drastically

The fact that party members were not only organised as a separate and distinct class from the workers but also following their own distinct political agenda, was a fundamental structural flaw. The existence of this flaw would mean that centres of organisation outside of the control of the Proletarian Dictatorship, centres such as the factory committees, could not be tolerated — and as it turns out, weren't.



limit the authority of capital.⁹

Such an order seems to represent the potential of the Factory Committee movement to aid the achievement of the positive self-consciousness of "Socialist Man", to aid a change in the relationship of man and machine, to turn the latter into an instrument of liberation instead of its traditional role as one of enslavement. Strangely, Smith is enthusiastic to prove the argument that the Bolsheviks were not hostile to this movement in any way and, "up to October, not aware of any incompatibility between the workers' control of the factory committees and state organisation of the economy."¹⁰ This will- ing blindness to the realities of Leninism

ignores the strategy best articulated by that other master of modern totalitarian politics, Adolf Hitler — namely, that "An intelligent victor will, whenever possible, present his demands to the vanquished in instalments."¹¹ The argument which Smith attributes to the anarchist historian Paul Avrich, seems more to the point:

From April to November, Lenin had aligned himself with the anarcho-syn- dicalists who desired the utter annihi- lation of the old order . . . But after the Bolshevik Revolution was secured, Lenin abandoned the forces of destruc- tion for those of centralisation and order.¹²

Lenin's devotion to the principle more hon- estly articulated not long after by his German counterpart was reflected in *The State and Revolution*, published in early December 1917 but written several months beforehand.¹³ Instead of seeking to bring about that fundamental change in the human character from impoverish- ment and slavishness to self-affirmation through liberation from enslavement to a will other than one's own (which, one would assume, would be what would gen- erally be described as a revolutionary one), the whole concept of socialism was reduced to bookkeeping — "conventional managerial authority, labour discipline and payment in proportion to skill and respon- sibility."¹⁴ There was, of course, no men- tion of the positive self-consciousness of "Socialist Man", but rather the significant- ly different idea that "we want the social- ist revolution with human nature as it is now, with human nature that cannot dis- pense with subordination, control and managers."¹⁵ Interestingly for Smith, this version of Socialism was described by Lenin in September 1917 (that is, before the October revolution and the absolute corruption of the Bolsheviks through the acquisition of absolutist state power) as "nothing but state capitalist monopoly made to benefit the whole people."¹⁶

Despite these horrendously authoritarian statements, or perhaps because of them (keeping in mind the Hitlerite principle) the Bolshevik Government rubber-stamped the Factory Committee movement that preceded it with a decree of 14 November 1917, legalising workers' control of pro- duction throughout Russia.¹⁷ At this stage the Bolsheviks still needed to be

seen to be supporting the Factory Committee movement, given that it was both a bulwark against the capitalist sys- tem, not yet entirely dead and soon to be recuperated, and "Menshevik influence in the trade unions."¹⁸ They could not help but give their support to a movement fun- damentally opposed to the concept of a proletarian dictatorship; in the words of an exceptionally honest Bolshevik histori- an, they were being

carried along by a movement which was in many respects embarrassing to them but which, as a main driving force of the revolution, they could not fail to endorse.¹⁹

Thus the attack on the regime of workers' control (and by extension the tendency towards workers' self-management) began with this first instalment, taking the impetus for workers' control from the workers themselves and turning it into a gift of state power, which could be (and, we repeat, was) taken away as easily as it was given.

The next attack by the authoritarian rev- olution on the libertarian revolution came as the Factory Committees made the attempt at the same time to create a national feder- ation — which, as Brinton points out, would have come far closer to achieving the so- called "dictatorship" of those who actually worked, as opposed to politicians who merely appropriated terms such as "work- er" to themselves for the sake of expedi- ency and convenience.²⁰ Clearly afraid of this attempt at organisation and regarding it as a challenge to their authority, the Bolsheviks pulled out the stops and called on the trade union bureaucracy to put a stop to it. The latter fulfilled the task suc- cessfully by coming out "firmly against the attempt of the Factory Committees to form a national organisation of their own," actively preventing "the convocation of a planned All-Russian Congress of Factory Committees" and demanding "total subordi- nation on the part of the committees."²¹ Ironically enough, latter-day Leninists would blame them for their parochialism and lack of interest in the world outside of the factories, and use that as a justification for removing them from the factory land- scape altogether.²²

Having denied them the ability to form their own organisation, the next move of

the Bolsheviks was to force them into channels of operation which they themselves dominated, and from that point on to tighten the noose to the point where the Factory Committees were little more than receptacles for the fulfilment of downward-channelled directives from the Kremlin. Having stymied the efforts of the Factory Committees to organise independently and autonomously, the Bolsheviks were in a position to begin drawing the decision-making power formally held in the hands of the workers' committees to themselves. They proceeded to do so by supplanting the Factory Committees with their own "Central Soviet of Factory Committees," and then the "All-Russian Council of Workers' Control," both Party-dominated, and the latter an umbrella organisation also including delegates from the unions, against whose bureaucratism the Factory Committees were initially organised in opposition to.²³

From this point on, the slippery descent into the mire of authoritarianism and political manoeuvring that prepared the ground for Stalinism gained steady momentum (and this is all the more sad-dening considering the fact that we have not even left 1917 yet). Again the Hitler principle was put into effect with the decree bringing into existence the Supreme Economic Council ("Vesenka") in December 1917, initially composed of "Left" Communists to sweeten the blow caused by the further centralisation of power.²⁴ Although coopting some of its leadership, the Vesenka "absorbed" the All-Russian Council of Workers' Control before the latter had even got going" and was "even more heavily weighted in favour of the unions, but also comprising direct nominees of the State (ie. of the Party)."²⁵ In the newly-founded "workers' state" the voice of the workers was being drowned out by that of politicians and bureaucrats, who had taken it upon themselves to speak on behalf of others, in traditional middle-class style.

The death knell to the fleeting self-eman-cipation of the workers of Russia was sounded in March 1918, as the token "Left" Communists (Osinsky, Bukharin, Lomov and Smirnov) were ousted from the Vesenka and replaced with "moder-ates" (Milutin and Rykov) more willing to follow orders.²⁶ On 26 March the All-

Russian Central Executive Committee published a decree ending workers' control on the railroads and granting dictatorial powers to the Commissariat of Communications, stressing the need for "iron labour discipline" and "individual management."²⁷ From here the leap to dictatorial control of industry and the militarisation of labour as advocated by Leon Trotsky was not hard to make, the alien-ated relations of production associated with all class societies thus restored and intensified as the world was engulfed with propaganda about the "workers' para-dise" being constructed in Russia.

Marxist-Leninist theory holds that state power must be captured by the "van-guard" of the working class in order to suppress the "bourgeoisie," after which time it will simply "wither away," and what will be left will be a workers' utopia based (presumably) on something approaching the model of organisation offered by the Factory Committees. If the period of history examined here — that of late 1917 to early 1918 — proves any-thing, it must be that this theory is noth-ing other than a utopian dream. The type of society offered by Bolshevik rhetoric was crushed by the Bolsheviks in prac-tise, and this was a direct result of its failure to make the one consistent with the other. Workers' control developed in Russia not with the aid of the ill-con-ceived ideas of Lenin but in spite of them. The latter are to blame for the fact not only that the elementary parts of a truly Socialist society were crushed under a bureaucratic behemoth, but also for creat-ing favourable conditions for the rise of a truly pathological character of the type of Stalin.

Ben

Footnotes

1. Brinton, M., *The Bolsheviks and Workers' Control 1917-1921: The State and Counter-Revolution*, London; Solidarity and Detroit; Black and Red, 1975, introduction, pp. I - XV.
2. Ibid., p. VI.
3. Marx, K., *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* (1844).
4. Brinton, op. cit., p. XII.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.

7. Smith, S., *Red Petrograd: Revolution in the Factories 1917-18*, Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 48-9.

8. Ibid, p. 49.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., p. 150.

11. Hitler, A., *Mein Kampf* (1925), quoted by Andy Anderson in *Hungary '56*, London; Solidarity and Detroit; Black and Red, 1964, p. 12.

12. Avrich, P, [?].

13. Brinton, op. cit., p. 24.

14. Brinton, Ibid., and Daniels, op. cit., p. 82.

15. Brinton, Ibid.

16. Daniels, R V, *The Conscience of the Revolution: Communist Opposition in Soviet Russia*, Boulder; Westview Press, 1988, p. 82.

17. Ibid., p. 83.

18. Brinton, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

19. Panratova, A, *The Workers' Movement in 1917*, quoted in Ibid., p. 13.

20. Ibid., p. 19.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid, pp. 19-22.

24. Daniels, op. cit., p. 84.

25. Brinton, op. cit., pp. 22-3.

26. Ibid., p. 37, and Daniels, op. cit.

27. Ibid.

Bibliography.

Brinton, M., *The Bolsheviks and Workers' Control 1917-1921: The State and Counter-Revolution*, London; Solidarity and Detroit; Black and Red, 1975.

Marx, K., *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* (1844).

Smith, S., *Red Petrograd: Revolution in the Factories 1917-18*, Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Anderson, A., *Hungary '56*, London; Solidarity and Detroit; Black and Red, 1964.

Daniels, R. V., *The Conscience of the Revolution: Communist Opposition in Soviet Russia*, Boulder; Westview Press, 1988.

B. Traven

Sadly, these days B.Traven and his many novels have been assigned to relative obscurity in the world of literature and politics. Traven was but one of the many aliases used by this mysterious author, adventurer and revolutionary. Many historians have tried to uncover the secret behind Traven's identity, linking him to people ranging from the illegitimate son of Kaiser Wilhelm II to a theology student from Cincinnati. Whatever the case, Traven always shied away from the spectacular role of author as superstar, preferring to let his novels be judged by the ideas contained within.

Traven's wish for privacy and anonymity can be witnessed by the number of different assumed names he went under to disguise his identity. Over the years he went under many different guises such as Ret Marut, Traven Torsvan and Hal Croves. Our interest in Traven begins with his earliest proven incarnation as Ret Marut. Marut was an aspiring German actor who later became involved in anarchist politics and also edited an anarchist/pacifist magazine "Der Ziegelbrenner" or "The Brick Burner."

Marut wasn't just an armchair revolutionary though. He actively participated in the insurgent Bavarian Republic of Councils in 1919 as chief censor of the bourgeois press, keeping the latter day Andrew Bolts in their place. Marut was active in the Bavarian capital, Munich, and narrowly escaped summary execution when the revolutionary fervor was crushed by nascent fascist Friekorps and 'loyal' troops sent in by the German equivalent of the Labor party, the Social Democrats. Understandably, Marut went underground after the White reaction destroyed the Council Movement in May 1919. Up until September there were still executions of revolutionaries taking place to avenge the middle classes who had had power temporarily wrenched away from them by the proletarian class. Marut later resurfaced in Chiapas, Mexico in the early 1920's under the name Traven, under which he wrote his first, and in my humble opinion, greatest novel, "The Death Ship."

The Death Ship is the story of a horrendous chain of events that befall an American sailor appropriately named



Gerard Gales. Gales loses his identity, humanity and right to existence when his ship sails without him with his sailor's card and passport still on board in his jacket pocket.

Stranded on foreign shores, our sailor is systematically persecuted by the authorities of various European countries he has no desire to even be in. Gales is frequently jailed, deported and even sentenced to death simply for the crime of being a worker without papers. Needless to say he is treated with respect only by fellow workers who share what little they have with him.

Bereft of a sailor's card, Gales cannot secure a job on a ship to go home to New Orleans. To further complicate matters, the American consulate won't supply him with the necessary papers because he has no proof of his identity. Gale's tra-

vails with bureaucracy assume truly Kafkaesque proportions in his attempts to prove his American citizenship; while wealthy fellow travellers obtain the necessary documents within minutes provided by obsequious officials who make ordinary folk wait around like cattle.

Desperate to escape his precarious situation, Gales reluctantly accepts a job on the Yorikke, a rusting hulk rumoured to have been built in the times of the ancients. Gale's fellow crewmates are all in the same unfortunate position, unable to secure passage on a decent ship with Union conditions.

The Yorikke is truly a death ship. The work regime is torturous and simply unsustainable with sailors jumping overboard or murdered by the captain, unable to keep pace with the hellish amount of work. Not much can be said

These days novels that articulate the premise that any positive change from below is possible are as rare as hen's teeth. Indeed we are expected to consume defeatist literature which depicts the working class as boorish, uncultured thugs, schooled in misogyny and mired in xenophobia and self-hatred, yet we are given no plausible reasons for such outlandish stereotypes.

for the health and safety conditions either with sailors frequently burning themselves in the antiquated steam room, and even the ships rats won't touch the swill doled out to the hapless and perennially hungry sailors.

Some critics have dismissed *The Death Ship* and Traven's body of work as being hopelessly dated and idealistic because Traven makes explicit attacks on the dehumanizing aspects of capitalism and unfettered greed. Indeed, the last few decades have seen popular literature retreat either into general misanthropy or even worse, the glossolalia of post modernism. These days novels that articulate the premise that any positive change from below is possible are as rare as hen's teeth. Indeed we are expected to consume defeatist literature which depicts the working class as boorish, uncultured thugs, schooled in misogyny and mired in xenophobia and self-hatred, yet we are given no plausible reasons for such outlandish stereotypes.

Traven was out from much different cloth compared to the current crop of defeatists and outright reactionaries masquerading as serious authors so popular today. While Gales and his fellow sailors often faced insurmountable odds put in their way by the real axis of evil - the bosses, cops and the state - they always fight back using solidarity and mutual aid as the only weapons they have. While *The Death Ship* is a truly terrifying book to read, it is also full of black humour, the inventiveness of which is truly astonishing. There are also numerous references to the Industrial Workers of the World and the Russian Revolution which remind the reader of a time not so long ago when the ruling class was in collective retreat and world wide revolution seemed just around the corner.

In the current political climate, *The Death Ship* serves to remind the reader of the plight of seafarers, particularly those from Majority world (Third world) countries who sail on modern day death ships which are registered under flags of convenience so the owners can circumvent environmental, health and safety, and pay conditions hard fought for by previous generations of sailors. At the

moment in Australia, ships that operate in Australian waters are being reflagged, the crews sacked and then replaced by Ukrainian sailors on only \$20,000 a year. Needless to say, the Ukrainian crews will be forced to work much harder for much less than their now unemployed Australian class brothers and sisters as transnational capital seeks to push wages and conditions down in the global race to the bottom.

Hopefully sailors, who have traditionally been the most revolutionary sector of the working class, will not fall for the fratricidal myth that their jobs are being stolen by cheaper Third world labour. This blame the victim mentality only serves to disguise the role that governments in conjunction with shipping companies have played in decimating the working conditions of sailors.

Likewise, comparisons can be drawn between *The Death Ship* and the current plight of workers wishing free movement across borders worldwide. Not much has changed since Gales was locked up for being an illegal alien in the 1920's to Australia in 2002 where workers are put in camps in the desert simply for the crime of arriving without the necessary documentation. In fact authorities would prefer that undocumented workers died in their quest to reach the workers paradises of America, Australia and Europe.

Who mourns the 2000 Latin Americans who have died in the last 10 years trying to cross the militarized border between Mexico and the U.S.A., or the 353 Afghans and Iraqis who drowned trying to reach Australia in an area under constant military surveillance? Not to forget the Moroccans washed up on Spanish beaches, Chinese suffocated in shipping containers en route to Britain or Gypsies murdered by racists everywhere?

Every time a Union leader blames 'foreigners' for taking jobs this serves as justification for the unabated pogrom committed against workers without papers everywhere. Adopting the rhetoric of the masters only makes workers more despicable slaves when they swallow wholesale the bile spewed forth by their rulers. To be a patriot is to be an assas-

sin especially when a fellow worker is at the other end of sights. Now more than ever, workers of the world have to realize that national boundaries are no more than lines a cartographer has drawn on a map. Capital knows no boundaries, so why should we continue to self-administer the poisons of nationalism and racism which divide us rather than unite us. "Workers of the world, you have no country!"

Tall Paul

Books by B. Traven (in English):

The Bridge in the Jungle
The Carreta
The Cotton Pickers
The Creation of the Sun and the Moon
The Death Ship: The Story of an American Sailor
The General from the Jungle Government
The Kidnapped Saint and Other Stories
The March to Caobaland (aka March to the Monteria)
The Night Visitor and Other Stories
The Rebellion of the Hanged
Stories by the Man Nobody Knows
The Treasure of the Sierra Madre
The White Rose

Books on B. Traven (in English):

Michael L. Baumann, B. Traven, an Introduction
 Donald O. Chankin, Anonymity and Death: The Fiction of B. Traven
 Judy Stone, The Mystery of B. Traven

./short story

Anne Bonny & Mary Read; Pirates, Adventurers, Lovers

Are you ready for a tall tale then? A tale of 2 women whose lives were remarkable. I'll not promise 'tis the truth...pirate legends not being well known for their accuracy. What is the truth about the lives of Anne Bonny and Mary Read? Like all adventurers, their lives of romance, rebellion and lusty independence are recalled with wild variation, and this is but one retelling.

Mary Read was born in England to a woman who had a son by a man who belonged to the sea. He was cast away or died on the last of his journeys and never heard from again. Now, Mary's mother, fair and young and not taking care, met with an accident. With no husband to give her respectability and her belly showing her shame she took leave of her husband's relations and went away to the country. Soon afterward, her son died, leaving her grief stricken until the birth of a wee daughter.

Mother and daughter lived here for some years until, her money all but gone, she returned to London and her husband's mother, who was in some circumstance if you know what I mean. Hoping she might prevail upon the woman to provide for Mary and herself, she dressed her daughter as a boy and presented her as the son of her dead husband. And so, she raised the girl a lad called Mark and when Mary came of age induced her to conceal her gender.

When the old woman died and they were more and more reduced in their circumstances, Mary's mother put her out to work as a footboy to a French lady - but Mary, grown bold and strong and possessed of a roving mind, quitted that to board a Man-o-War, then later, with bloodlust in her veins, left to carry arms in a regiment of foot. Mark was not a rich man, and commissions not being available but to be bought and sold, she quitted there and joined a regiment of horse.

Here, she acted with great bravery and kept her arms in the best order. Until, mind you, she fell in love. Her accoutrements became quite neglected and 'tis told that when a party was ordered for battle she was the first to be at arms, but often was the case that it was only

to be with her love, who was ordered to go when she was not. Her comrades began to think her mad. She won her man's affections by revealing her feminine modesty and virtue and when winter came and the campaign over they went to town to buy her women's clothing and declared their love for each other.

What good fortune that their story was a fascinating one, as at the wedding a goodly number were keen to make a gift to the bride. The curious circumstances of their union gaining a great deal of favour, and well set up now they both were discharged from the service and went into the business of the Three Trade Horses.

The Horses was a fine enterprise - they

had many a curious officer eating with them and business was good, but the husband too soon died and the Peace of Ryswick that came was poor for trade. Packing away her dresses once more, Mark takes leave for Holland and stays a short time in another regiment of foot but, resolute to make her fortune some more prosperous way and full of hope of a grand new life, boards a ship bound for the West Indies.

This grand life was not to be. The vessel was taken by English pirates who robbed the passengers, killed the crew and scuttled the ship. They took her with them, she being the only English person aboard. She took to this life with gusto, revelling in the freedom of the seas and the renegades disregard for convention. None were so resolute in times of action



or ready to stay the deck in close quarters and whether she was brave or bloodthirsty is not for certain.

She returned to land at such time as the King proclaimed a free pardon for all pirates as should give themselves up by a certain day. Civilisation was not kind to our Mary, who was used to the strict honour codes of the pirates, not the confining clothes and clawing parlours of society ladies. Doing as she felt, Mary's landlubben days were not long as when, Captain Rodgers, Governor of Providence, was fitting a vessel to cruise against the Spaniards, she departed for that island so as to join the crew. Not far from port the crew rose up against their commanders and Mary found them to be of her old trade, to which she returned.

New Providence was a pirate haven full of scoundrels and homosexuals, shysters and drunkards, crooks and outlaws. It was here that our Mary met Anne Bonny. Bonn was born in County Cork, Ireland, the bastard of an attorney at law. Through strange events and the theft of three silver spoons, Anne was put into breaches and passed for a lad until her family including her father was forced to flee scandal to Charleston, South Carolina.

He did very well there and though he was looking for a suitable match for Anne, she ruined her chances by marrying renegade seaman and sometimes pirate, James Bonny. Unhappy to say the least, William Cormac turned his daughter out and suffered the burning of his plantation by his vengeful child.

Anne and James shipped for Providence, but she soon found his snitching, cowardly ways unbecoming and took up a life with the pirates that frequented these shores, and the women and men who loved them. Loving the fierce and courageous temper of these rogues she became intimately acquainted with the notorious "Calico Jack" Rackham. James was none too happy about this affair and kidnapped Anne, bringing her before the Governor naked and bound and charged her with deserting her husband. He suggested a "divorce by sale", a more lenient punishment than the felony charge might otherwise attract. Anne

knew he only did it for the money and refused to be bought like a hog. She expressed herself so violently that none stepped forward to make an offer. The Governor released her on condition that she return to her husband, but James had fled the storm he had created and barely escaped the chase Anne and Mark gave him. Frustrated, Anne was tempted to shoot the Governor, but listened to Mark's counsel and donned men's apparel, leaving for a merry life with her and Jack.

She was a daring fighter and tales of her deadly use of sword and pistol spread across the sea. It is said of her that she publicly stripped her fencing instructor in a match and took to a man's head with a chair leg when he made an unwanted advance.

Such a lusty lass was quick to win the heart of our Mark. One day Calico Jack, his jealousy aroused by their intimacy burst into Anne's cabin, ready to slit "Mark's" throat. He found one in bed naked and the other with half her clothes missing and the two told him that these circumstances arose when only moments before, Anne had ripped off Mark's clothing, herself just discovering him to be a woman.

Jack laughed and his rage abated. A woman, ha! He was a great pirate and a bold captain, but not so smart. He agreed to keep the 'secret' of Mark's true sex and felt his position as was secured. Anne and Mary remained intimate, and cared little for what was thought of them, taking other lovers and assuming men's or women's clothing as it took them, confusing their own crew and certainly their pitiful victims. In due course they took command of another ship, together taking a great many vessels belonging to the West Indies, bound to and from England. Anyone they met of talent that might be useful to them was taken by force.

Both were known as clever adversaries and used all means to engineer their ends. One of their victims was Anne's former lover who owned a vessel put to sea under Captain Hudson. Anne seduced Hudson into bringing her aboard the Royal Queen then drugged him with wine

and doused the firing pins of the cannons. When she returned next day to her own ship the Queen's gunmen were unable to open fire and the ship, bounty and crew easily captured.

The pair gained much notoriety and their exploits at sea continued for many years despite unnumbered Men-o-War being sent out to capture those infamous women. Until that is, they were captured aboard Calico Jack's ship by the worst sort of man, a pirate turned pirate-hunter named Captain Barnet. Jack and his crew were drunk as skunks and it was only Mary and Anne that held the decks while these yellow bellied slags cowered below. Not surprising then that the two were mad as devils at their crewmates. "If there's a man among you, come out and fight!" None did and Anne shot into the hold, killing one and wounding another. It took more than an hour to subdue their fury and finally when the gunpowder cleared and the blood was washed from the decks the crew to trial in Jamaica. Both Anne and Mary were convicted of piracy and sentenced to be hanged, which sentence was overturned when they pleaded their bellies. It is not a sure thing that either was pregnant, but no court would hang the innocent life of an unborn child and they were pardoned.

The crew, including Calico Jack, was sentenced to hang and had no patriarchy to protect their virtue. He was granted a visit by Anne. Not inclined to be easy with such a cowardly character as he, she told him "I am sorry to see you in this predicament, but had you fought like a man you would not now have to die like a dog."

Mary died of a fever contracted in prison and Anne Bonny appears now only in children's stories and on oatmeal boxes, being portrayed as a pirate captain's mistress, but she was far, far from that. Anne and Mary were fighters, renegades and in their lives conspired against the King's authority to live by their own.

Eleven

On Fire: The Battle of Genoa and the Anti-Capitalist Movement

On Fire is comprised of sixteen short essays written in response to the anti-G8 demonstrations in Genoa in July 2001, taken either from reports posted on the Internet or solicited directly by One-Off. In their Introduction, the editors stress that the book pursues no particular 'line', but is instead intended to encourage debate about the different ideas and practices of those engaged in militant anti-capitalist protest. Thankfully, this courtesy doesn't extend to groups such as the Socialist Workers' Party,¹ a UK-based Trotskyist sect whose attempts to cash-in on the 'anti-globalisation' movement are neatly exposed in the *SchNEWS* pamphlet 'Monopolise Resistance?', and whose anthology *Anti-Capitalism: A Guide to the Movement* is useful if for no other reason than to reaffirm the value of books such as *On Fire*.² In other words, as another reviewer has written, these are the accounts of people who want to make history, not the interpretations of journalists or specialists in ideology.³ As such - and because it's got a lot of kick-ass photos of people rioting - *On Fire* is essential reading.

The three days of protest against the G8 Summit in Genoa, from July 19-21 2001, are probably best remembered here in Australia for the police murder of a protester, Carlo Giuliani. Given the reaction of many on the left to his death (or at least in the immediate aftermath) the allegation that the 'anarchist' black bloc was somehow responsible for this and other police assaults is one of the main topics of discussion. In fact, many of the articles contained in *On Fire* could be read as rejoinders to the black bloc's critics. Rather than constituting an unqualified defence, however, these accounts concentrate upon clearing up some of the many misconceptions regarding the black bloc's role. For example, one writer points out that "for all that the media made of the 'anarchist' black bloc, if you look at photos of those engaged in the rioting there are loads of red hammer and sickle flags in amongst the black-clad people..."⁴ In other words, militant acts of protest - including but not limited to 'rioting' - weren't confined to those performed by anarchists. And as a number of other writers point out, police strategy and tactics weren't predicated upon distinguishing between the 'good' protesters and the 'bad': the police used violence against everyone. Referring to the police raids on the Indymedia centre and the Diaz school on the night of July 21 and the morning of July 22, 'Brian S' writes:

'The police entered: the media and the politicians were kept out. And they beat people. They beat people who had been sleeping, who held up their hands in a gesture of innocence and cried out, "Pacifisti! Pacifisti!" They beat the men and the women. They broke bones, smashed teeth, shattered skulls. They left blood on the walls, on the windows, a pool of it in every spot where people had been sleeping. When they had finished their work, they brought in the ambulances. All night long we watched from across the street as the stretchers were carried out, as people were taken to the jail ward of the hospital, or simply to jail. And in the jail, many of them were tortured again, in rooms with pictures of Mussolini on the wall.'⁵

Some have seen in this response of the Italian state to 'anti-capitalist' protest a possible return to the 'strategy of tension' of the late 1960s / early 70s... but that's another story.

The other important (but often overlooked) factor shaping the course that events in Genoa took - and which goes some way towards explaining the recriminations following them - was just how chaotic the situation was on the streets, a situation exacerbated by a certain lack of organisation. (And er, the presence of some 25,000 police!) According to Diego Jones, local anarchists failed to take basic steps in preparation for the arrival of thousands of anarchists from outside of Genoa and Italy, meaning that many had to make plans with little knowledge of local conditions.⁶ Elsewhere, one anonymous contributor writes that on Friday's 'direct action day' many anarchists involved in the Italian Anarchist Federation (FAI) had organised to march with striking workers and their families, and had sensibly promised that there would be no violence on this particular march.⁷ So, perhaps this was just as much a question of communication as it was one of preparation - one highlighting the fact that communication within and across the movement is just as vital as that between the movement and those 'outside' of it.

Finally, while there are many other worthwhile contributions, mention should be made of Massimo de Angelis's 'From Movement to Society', which - along with starhawk's 'Staying on the Streets' - is one of the longer and more reflective pieces.⁸ One of the more interesting aspects of de Angelis's article is the fact that he man-

ages to provide a general outline of the transition from (political) movement to radical social change (libertarian communism) without once noting the similarities between his vision and contemporary anarchism. Or that the supposed novelties of the anti-capitalist movement - the refusal to choose between state and market, recognition of the fact that means cannot be divorced from ends, non-hierarchical decision-making / direct democracy etc - are fundamental aspects of the anarchist tradition. Why is that, I wonder?

On Fire: The battle of Genoa and the anti-capitalist movement, produced by One-Off Press, distributed through AK Distribution and Active Distribution, September 2001.

Andy

1. The SWP is described in the Glossary as a "small political group who reject neo-colonialism in favour of the imposition of the agenda of Western Marxist leaders on everyone else by selling newspapers and other forms of skullduggery". 'Globalisation', on the other hand, is defined as a "trendy euphemism for neo-colonialism. The imposition of the agenda of Western business leaders on everyone else by force, bribery or other forms of skullduggery". Spot the difference? (*On Fire*, p.6).
2. The *SchNEWS* pamphlet should be available on their website www.schnews.org.uk, while *Anti-Capitalism* is no doubt available from the SWP's local franchise, the International Socialist Organisation (ISO).
3. 'The Ecstasy of Resistance', *Black Flag*, no.221, p.36.
4. Anonymous, 'Being Busy', *On Fire*, p.45. 'Being Busy' is the article which provides the most coherent overview of what happened in Genoa, and not coincidentally perhaps, is provided by one of the people associated with the UK zine *Do or Die*.
5. 'Reporting From the Front Line', *ibid.*, p.21.
6. 'Shooting Blanks', *ibid.*, p.10.
7. 'Being Busy', *ibid.*, pp.46-47.
8. Also available from www.thecommoner.org and www.starhawk.org, respectively.

A Pat on the Backside

Do you read Pat Califia's work for the art or for the porn? Or for the delightful way s/he transgresses the pigeon holes that might make review writing a little easier? Perhaps for stories that flow with eroticism and words that drip with sensuality like wax from a burning candle?

No Mercy (1) is what has become known as 'sexually explicit fiction', not porn. One distinction between these two tags is a recognition of cerebral function as sexual stimulant. Another is the dedication of a good deal of text to creating appreciable characters and settings. (Or maybe it's just about renaming the parameters, but not changing them? Good porn is still good porn, after all.)

High school rebels, body piercers, demi-goddesses, house bois and Veshnya (2) romp, screw and scurry through childhood bedtime stories, horror, fantasy, romance and sci-fi, all plunged into a seething quagmire of sexiness. Each story comes out soaked with a lust that reverberates. Describing one of his characters Pat writes, "A sense of

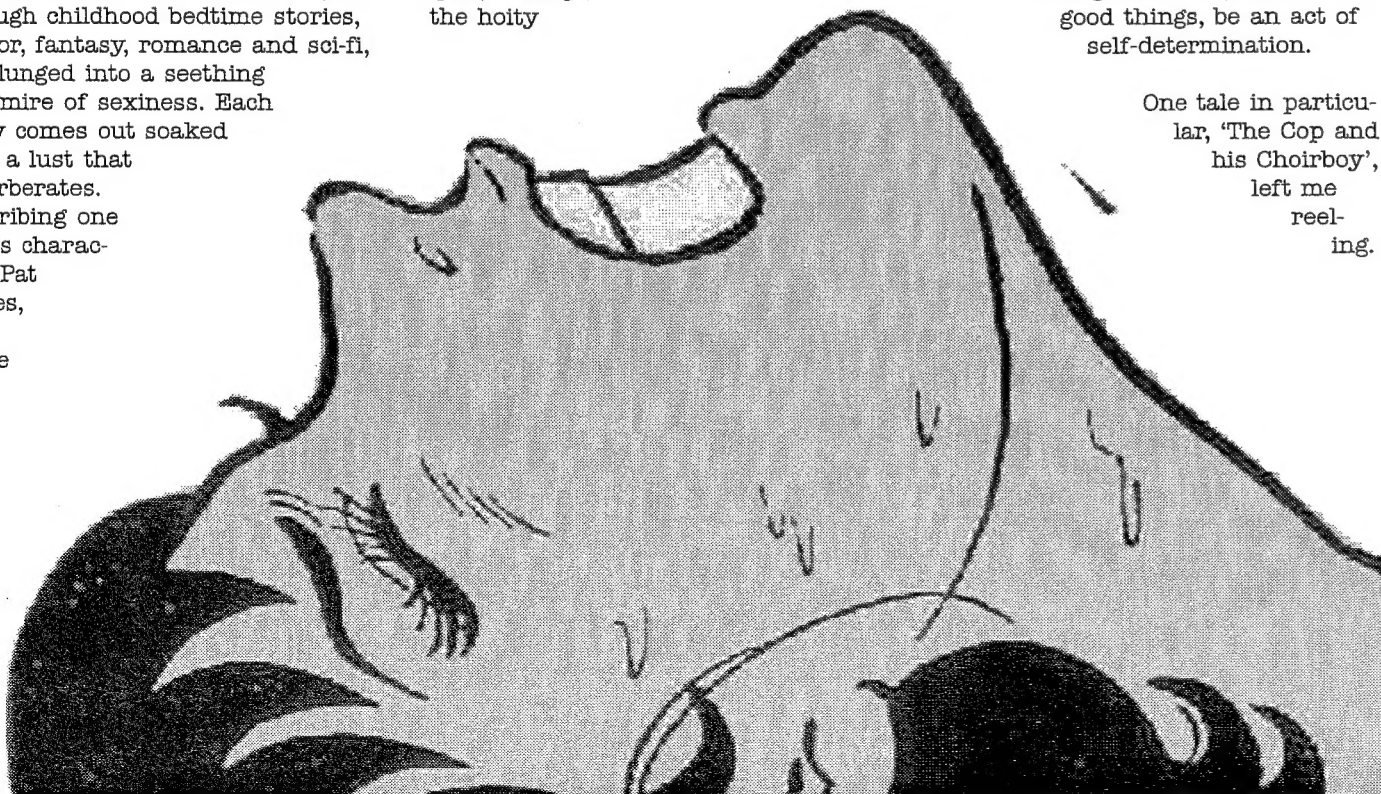
menace came off her body the way nostalgia emanates from a sunset." (3) In another story, a frustrated dyke, angry at the treatment she endures in a post war workforce, introduces her own special programming glitch into the software of a fully equipped submissive fantasy android. These are the bold characters of *No Mercy*, a work that soldiers together a multitude of short fiction genres. While this collection didn't have me reaching for the lube with quite the frequency of *Macho Shuts* (4), I'll happily forgive, because I was turned on by reading erotic fiction that explores themes I can relate to.

The 11 stories in *No Mercy* deal with love, art/drag, culture and politics, impassioned youthful rebellion and the like. All the marrow of life. Class war gets an airing when (in the title track and the prequel, 'Mercy') the hoity

toity richgirl Domme gets exactly what she deserves. Without wanting to give the story away, I couldn't help smiling when the working class submissive gets exactly what she deserves as well. These writings, like others dealing with BDSM, unravel fantasies about the pleasures of desire and eroticism, but more confrontingly, the pleasures of power and authority and control of the territory of the human body. Think of it as a pornographic dialogue on borders.

Califia's treatment of gender and sexuality as mutable are both crucial and incidental to the stories. Don't be surprised when Pat Califia gives the butch leatherdyke a male pronoun - normative genders would be confusing. There is an intimate understanding of transexuality because intrinsic to the writing and life of the author is the notion that gender can, like all good things, be an act of self-determination.

One tale in particular, 'The Cop and his Choirboy', left me reeling.



By limiting what we can read about, the state sets our agenda for social change. When any medium of expression is hampered by police powers, we lose some of our latitude to criticise the institutions that govern our lives.

I found it confronting, full-on and arousing. This is the prose that Califia needs to defend, and does, in articles like 'Dangerous Tongues', the introduction she wrote for *Forbidden Passages* (5). This collection of ideas from banned authors in the company of Kathy Acker and bell hooks, John Preston and Susie Bright, was compiled to highlight the impact of censorship and to raise a defense fund for Little Sister's Book and Art Emporium, a gay bookstore in Vancouver that challenged the mass seizure of gay and feminist literature at the Canadian border (p.9).

In questioning why these and other works can and have been seized, s/he rages against the pro-censorship feminism of Dworkin and MacKinnon, against public passivity/complicity, (internalised) homophobia and the discomfort we feel when we realise the power of the government to burn books, fine publishers and put presses out of business.

"By limiting what we can read about, the state sets our agenda for social change. When any medium of expression is hampered by police powers, we lose some of our latitude to criticise the institutions that govern our lives" (p.10). Pat suggests we need to be vigilant to make these institutions accountable; that we should (speaking specifically to Americans here) make an appearance as "a calm adult who believes in the First Amendment". Huh! I say. More directly, we should politely approach bookstore owners with our support or criticism, address library boards and raise money for legal battles. S/he also gives us the hard sell: <<Buy this Book>> and support the availability of sexually explicit material.

I get the impression the emphasis here is more about being able to crit-

icise the institutions of power than getting rid of them, but that's a conversation I'd want to have in person. The afterword of *No Mercy* ends: "May we all live to see the day when ownership of the body is returned to the individual and both violence and shame are vanquished. A lot more democracy, a clean environment, and redistribution of wealth wouldn't hurt none, neither" (p.260). Author of 17 books, Pat contributes to an assortment of magazines and has long been admired and vilified as a sex radical trannie. It would definitely be an interesting chat.

In looking for an appropriate response to the outlawing of queer and erotic literature, Califia asks us to become sex radicals, the "...best sort of radical to be. Because when you get more information about your own sexuality and make it safe for your friends and partners to communicate honestly with you about their sexuality, the quality of your life improves immediately. When you free your body from the invisible control of church and state, you not only challenge some of the most authoritarian institutions in the world, you have more fun and better orgasms" (p.23).

Pat Califia's extensive list of works, written with the same intensity of heat as an arc welder, make thought-provoking reading for anyone with an interest in the social politics of anarchism. The fact is most people won't like this book and that's especially affirming for perverts who like more than a bit of kink with our cocoa. *No Mercy* is excellent bedtime reading and a wonderful reason to turn in early.

Eleven

1. Pat Califia
No Mercy
Alison Publications, 2000
2. the unfortunate inhabitants of the planet, Yggdrasil
3. 'Incense for the Queen of Heaven'
No Mercy, p.169
4. Pat Califia
Macho Shits
Alyson Publications, 1988
5. *Forbidden Passages: Writings Banned in Canada*
Cleis Press, 1995



Contacts & Resources

3CRCommunity

radio, 885AM. Write: 21 Smith St, Fitzroy, 3065. Phone: 9419 8377. Email: staff3cr@vicnet.net.au.

Access News - Independent current affairs program, 8pm - 8.30pm every Monday on Channel 31.

Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation (ASF-IWA) - Revolutionary industrial union. Write: Federation Secretary: PO Box 98, East Brunswick VIC 3067. Local groups and contacts in Adelaide, Canberra, Lismore (NSW), Melbourne, Sydney, Darwin. Education branch at La Trobe University in Melbourne (Syndicalist Education Union). Web: <http://www.asf.anarki.net>

Anarres Books - Anarchist mail order service. Write: PO Box 150, East Brunswick, VIC, 3067. Email: mailordef@anarres.org.au. Activate - Anarchist zine. Write: PO Box 503, Newtown, NSW, 2042. Email: copsaretops@hotmail.com.

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre - 207 Nicholson St, Footscray.

ATeam - Anarchist affinity group based in Melbourne and Sydney. Web: ateam.dolearmy.org.

Black Rose - One of Sydney's two anarchist bookshops: 83 Regent St, Chippendale. Write: PO Box 691, Newtown, NSW, 2042. Phone: 0425 315 502. Email: blakrose@cat.org.au.

COSHG: Coalition of Self Help & Social Action Groups - A network of self-help and social action groups. Publishes the COSHG Directory, which lists over 700 community groups throughout Victoria. Write: PO Box 251, East Brunswick, VIC, 3067. Phone: 9349 2301 (b/w 2-4pm Wednesday). Email: coshgmelb@yahoo.com.au.

Critical Mass - On the last Friday of every month, a mass cycle through Melbourne, beginning outside of the State Library @ 5.30pm.

Doin' Time - Radio program on 3CR covering prison / social justice issues, Monday, 5pm - 6pm. Write c/o 3CR.

Dole Army - Affinity group of students and unemployed people. Web: www.dolearmy.org.

Earth First! - Radical environmental group. Email: ef_au@hotmail.com.

East Timor Community

Computer Project (ETCCP) - Project supplying computers, training and other support to communities in East Timor.

Write: PO Box 756, Lower Brunswick, VIC, 3056. Email: etccp@solidarity.infoshop.org.au.

Food Not Bombs (FNB) - Group distributing free vegan food to the hungry. Write: PO Box 1158, North Fitzroy, VIC, 3068 or c/o Barricade.

Friends of the Earth (FOE) Australia - Environmental organisation composed of over a dozen autonomous groups. Melbourne: 312 Smith St, Collingwood. Write: PO Box 222, Fitzroy, VIC, 3065. Phone: 9419 8700. Email: foe@foe.org.au.

Grasslands Grocery - Organic cafe located at 205 Nicholson St, Footscray. 'A non-profit enterprise supporting innovative community projects'. Opening hours: Monday - Friday, 11am - 6pm. Phone: 9362 0830.

Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) - Revolutionary industrial union. Publish Direct Action. Write: Regional Organising Committee: PO Box 1013, Collingwood, VIC, 3066. Local groups in Adelaide, Albany (WA), Bellingen (NSW), Bracknell (TAS), Newcastle (NSW), Sydney. Email: iww-roc@lists.cat.org.au. Irene - Community art warehouse, and meeting space. 6 Pitt St, Brunswick.

Justice Action - Community group fighting for justice for prisoners. Publish Framed. Write: PO Box K366, Haymarket, NSW, 2000. Phone: (02) 9281 5100. Email: justiceaction@justiceaction.org.au.

Libertarian Workers' for a Self-Managed Society (LWSS) - Anarchist group. Publish The Anarchist Age Weekly Review. Write: PO Box 20, Parkville, VIC, 3062. Phone: 9828 2856 (24-hour answering service). Email: anarchistage@yahoo.com.

Midnight Star Social Centre: Squatted social centre. 55-57 Parramatta Rd, Homebush. Phone: 0415 765 7655.

No one is illegal - Melbourne based anti-borders collective. Phone: 0418 140 387. Email: nooneisillegal@netscape.net.

OnCall - Free zine by and for call centre workers. Write: PO Box 4, Enmore, NSW, 2042. Email: oncall_news@hotmail.com.

Pink Palace - Alternative venue space. 56-58 Eastment St, Northcote.

Red & Black - Long-running (30+ years) anarchist zine. Write: PO Box 12,

Quaama, NSW, 2550.

Revolutionary Action - Anti-capitalist, anti-statist collective. Write: PO Box 167, Keiraville, NSW, 2500.

Social Centre Autonomous Network (SCAN) - Network of squatting activists committed to creating squatted social centres in Sydney. Email: scan@active.org.au.

Spacestation - Independent media resource centre @ Irene. Write: PO Box 209, Brunswick, VIC, 3056. Phone: 9343 6593. Email: spacekids@myspinach.org.

Spiral Objective - Punk / alternative mail order service. Write: PO Box 126, Oaklands Park, SA, 5046. Email: spiralob@adelaide.on.net.

Sticky - The place for zines. Shop 10, Campbell Arcade (Flinders St Station subway via DeGraves St). Phone: 9654 8559.

SUWA (Squatters' & Unwaged Workers' Airwaves) - Anarchist radio program, Friday 5.30pm - 6.30pm, 3CR. Write c/o 3CR.

Syndicalist Education Union (SEU) - Radical union by and for students and teachers. Write: PO Box 98, East Brunswick, VIC, 3057. web: <http://seu.does.it>

The Anarchist World This Week - Anarchist radio program on 3CR, Wednesday: 10am - 11am. Presented by the Anarchist Media Institute / LWSS.

The Paper - 'Independent fortnightly news and opinion'. Write: PO Box 1733, Collingwood, VIC, 3066. Phone: 9343 6696. Email: info@thepaper.org.au.

Theft - Pro-situ zine. Write: PO Box 12197, A Beckett St, Melbourne, VIC, 3000. Email: theft@theftmag.com.

Untamed Publications - Anarchist / insurrectionist distribution service. Write: PO Box 148, Albury, NSW, 2640. Email: untamed@subdimension.com.

Victorian Social Justice Council - Unemployed workers group. Write: 242 Victoria St, Ballarat, VIC, 3350. Phone: 5331 2532.

Wildcat Collective - Anarchist group. Write: PO Box 8085, Hindley St, Adelaide, SA, 5000. Email: wildcat@start.com.au.

NB: If your group/project isn't listed here and it should be, or if the contact details are wrong, please let us know before our next issue (March 2003); a listing here is not an endorsement; (no) apologies for the focus on Melbourne.